GOD

A

Christian's Choice,

Compleated by particular Covenanting with GOD.

Together with an *APPENDIX*, containing Propositions, tending to clear up the Lawfulness, and Expediency of transacting with God in that way.

In pursuit of a Design proposed by Mr. *R. A.* in his Book entituled, *The Vindication of Godliness*. And by Mr. *Tho. Vincent*, in his Book, called *Words whereby we may be saved.*

To which is added,

A brief Discovery of the nearness of such a People unto God, on *Psal.* 148. 14.

By *SAMUEL WINNEY*, sometimes Minister of the Gospel at *Glaston* in Somersetshire.

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To the Worſhipful John Lane *Eſquire, Citizen of* London; *together with his Vertuous Yoke fellow, Mris.* Elizabeth Lane, S. W. *wiſheth happineſs here and hereafter.*

Honoured Sir, Madam;

GOD's making, and entring into Covenant with Man, I look upon as the moſt Condeſcending act of Grace, that ever was paſſed towards the Sons of Men. That the Almighty God ſhould form a Man out of the Clay, or Duſt, and then take him into Covenant with himſelf; It

was ſo high a Dignity vouchſafed, and Conferred, that can hardly enter into our thoughts with ſufficient admiration: but that when the firſt Covenant was broken, God ſhould make a new Covenant, and not take the forfeiture of the firſt, to his utter undoing, how much more great is his kindneſs! It ſhews the matchleſs and unconceiveable love and reſpect that God had to the Sons of men. Methinks the hearts of men ſhould not (I bleſs God I hope I can ſay in the ſimplicity of my heart, that I cannot) but, not onely with joy, but exultation humbly adore this his diſpenſation towards us. What, that we ſhould be in ſuch a Covenant? which is eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes, laid on a better

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Foundation, yea the beſt Promiſes, and the beſt Foundation: not only with man, but with him upon the account of the Mediator, a Covenant that ſhall never be broken; For God will never break it on his part, and he hath undertaken that we ſhall never finally fall from it, yea that hee'l pardon all the falls that are out of infirmity from it, that do thereby violate it. Certainly theſe expreſſions of *taking hold of God's Covenant, and joyning our ſelves to the Lord in Covenant*, are to my Soul, ſuch things as are better than a thouſand Cordials, to any ſinking, fainting heart, and through grace do, and ſhall Experimentally find more ſolid Satisfactory Comfort in, than in all things in the World; That ſuch as we are,

ſhould be ſo highly favoured, and befriended by the Great and Glorious God. Sir, the vindication of the lawfulneſs, and expediency of every Chriſtians particular Tranſacting with God in this way, is the ſum of all the middle part, which occaſioned the prefixing this foregoing, and the addition of the laſt part of this ſhort Treatiſe. To your ſelf and your good Lady do I dedicate this ſmall piece, as knowing that you have a through experience of the Truth which is contained in the following ſheets: And therefore not only upon the account of the honour, I ow you for the Multitude of kindneſſes, and tokens of faithful love which ſince I knew you, I and my whole family have received from your

your ſelf, your gracious Lady, yea your whole family; which I ſhall forbear here to mention further, as knowing, that you deſire not any one ſhould (as you your ſelf do not) *blow a Trumpet* before you; But for Religion's ſake, and that Covenant-relation, in which you and yours ſtand allyed to God. I know not how to teſtifie and render dues of thanks to you, in any other or better way than this; if you ſhall continue to favour me, in accepting this ſmall teſtimony of love, and reſpects to your ſelf, and family, as I know you do not only approve of, but alſo are perſwaded of, and have embraced the Truth, and Priviledges herein preſented to the World, I have attained the end in this Dedication. Sir, though they

are devoid of the Embelliſhments of large and many Marginal quotations, and the Embroidery of curious and enticing words; yet here are the plain Truths of God which I do the rather preſent to you, knowing that true of you which is upon record of *Jacob*, as his high Commendation, by the Holy Ghoſt, who though he was a great man, yet he was *a plain Man*; which phraſe is no mean Commendation, if we Conſider the Lord himſelf giving it to *Job. chap.* 1.1. with *Gen.* 25. 27. * who was a non-ſuch in his Generation; he

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* Which I cannot better expreſs than in the Paraphraſe of a Reverend Divine. *It is of larger ſignification than that phraſe of ours* [*a plain man*] *for that in Common ſpeech noteth one that is ſimple, and dealeth ſquarely and evenly, without fraud, deceit, guile, or any tricks in his actions, ſo may one be and have no great goodneſs in him; but this word is uſed to denote an upright-hearted man, a truely and intirely Godly man,*

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a perfect man that is good within as well as without, and good in all things, at all times, and in all places, one as well as another; one that carefully follows all the Commandments of God, not giving himſelf leave to ſwerve from any of Gods ways at any time. Mr. Wheatlys Prototype Examp. of Jacob. Cap. 26. P. 42.

was a *perfect and upright man*, &c. yea to the accuſers face, *Job* 2. 3. in the ſame words. Sir, deſiring God to reward all your labour of love to my ſelf, and all my brethren, which hath not been ſmall, for quantity or duration, even ever ſince I knew you, to my ſelf. In Teſtimony of my thankfulneſs to you, being well-aſſured of this, that your ſelf, and all yours will very well reliſh and accept, and do partake of the things herein treated of and humbly preſented to your view, not doubting, but they will be all your portion, I crave leave

to Commend them to you, and your ſelf and yours to the protection of Almighty God, and ſhall Continue to be,

Your unfeigned

thankful Friend,

and Servant in

the Goſpel.

S. W.

To

To the Courteous Reader, especially the Hearers of the things here presented to the publick.

Christian and courteous Reader,

THE *Exposing of these things to the publick view, was thus occasioned: Had not the subjoined Propositions been (though at the first written for the use and satisfaction of a private friend) desired by many, Ministers some, as well as others, to be made publick; I had not been prevailed with, to put these short notes before the eyes of the World: but being approved by the Judgment of the Reverend*

rend Author of Vindiciæ Pietatis, *and another Ancient and able Divine, whose joint ſuffrage I looked on as a ſufficient encouragement to it; and indeed without the Conſent of Mr.* R. A. *I ſhould never have yielded to it, looking upon it as a thing too ſaucy, and pragmatical without him, to adventure ſo to do, the thing vindicated being firſt expoſed and propoſed in his forenamed Book. And ſith I heard, that that way of tranſacting with God was queſtioned by ſome others, both before, and ſince they were expoſed to his judicious Conſideration; Some looking on it as a new kind of Covenant between God and his people, whereas it is but the ſame Covenant, more particularly applyed and laid hold on; I thought it meet, as I was encouraged to propoſe what meditations I had digeſted*

geſted for the ſatisfaction of their judgments, and preventing thoſe miſapprehenſions they had about it. Some other things I had in my thoughts to prefix: but by a providence (ſomething more than ordinary) was more preſt in my Spirit, to fix my thoughts on this Scripture here inſiſted on: which when I obſerved ſo ſuitable thereto, I could no longer forbear but ſet my moſt ſerious meditations on work to comply at once both with the Providence, and with the requeſt of my many friends, requeſting its Communication. The tranſcribing of which, though ſhort, yet would have proved tedious to the many that requeſted it, and I hope may bring ſome profit, and ſatisfaction to ſome into whoſe hands they may come; that never deſired, nor thought of any ſuch thing: The only thing I

have

have cause to be ashamed of, is, the narrowness of my own heart, in handling a matter of so excellent, and important a concern. I have desired to speak pertinently, and briefly, and not to enlarge by digression, but what may prove most suitable to my main design. In Sermons, that are preacht, where there is only hearing for the time of Speaking, there need to be inculcating things again and again, as others of my Brethren know as well as I: affection's Dull, memorie's treacherous, and after-meditation too too much neglected. So that repetitions, and rebearsal, if they be not vain repetitions, and affected, prove beneficial very much to the hearers, from whom (their understandings being also shallow, for the generality of most auditors,) the heads, and material passages once named only,

only, the moſt part of them paſs away, (if the affections be for preſent a little ſtirred) without that due ſavour and abiding efficacy, that by preſſing again and again they might have. Now this is needleſs in Printed Books, where reviewing makes up the ſupply of that if there be any additions or alterations, as ſome few there are, which may be obſerved by the Reader that heard theſe things; I hope they will not be unacceptable, or unprofitable. Accept of this ſmall undertaking as the good will of the Author, and read not in tranſitu, *or by rote, but with deliberation and meditation (for I am Confident, that the benefit we might reap by many a good book, is loſt for lack of this) that the ſweetneſs of this work (for 'tis both precious and ſweet, and I bleſs God for the*

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experience of it) may be at last diffused wholly into thy Soul: and then the design is accomplished, for which the publication was intended, and that this may be the issue, shall be the prayer of

Thine in the work

of the Gospel.

S. W.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction. Connexion of the words obſerved. Text conſidered; and the Doctrine drawn.

Joſhua 24. 22.

And Joſhua *ſaid unto the people, ye are witneſſes againſt your ſelves, that ye have choſen you the Lord, to ſerve him, and they ſaid we are witneſſes.*

BEloved, if I ſhould ſpeak to you in the words of *Joſhua* here, as he did to this people, would you, could you return the anſwer that this people did return to *Joſhua*? you that are here in this place. Have you choſen the Lord to you to ſerve him, yea or no? how many perſons are there that

that are yet to chuſe their Religion? to chuſe their God! after they have lived many years in the world. Nay Beloved, are not you yet to chuſe your God? the Lord help you to conſider it; how many people be there that are either altogether to chuſe to this day, or elſe have choſen others beſides the Lord, the true God! how many have choſen the God of this world for their God! How many have choſen Satan to be their God! and how many are joyned to ſin as their God, and theſe only will they ſerve; whereas it is the great duty and priviledge of Christians, to joyn themſelves, and to be joyned to the Lord, *Iſa.* 56. 3. with *1 *Cor.* 6. 17. not glued to ſin, but to the Lord, which denoteth the neareſt conjunction, and firmeſt adheſion, that can't be parted, or taken aſunder.

*Κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ.

Now my deſign in choice of this Scripture is, not to ſpeak to you concerning ſcrupulous queries, or of diſputable and doubtful things, but to treat with you about the main thing,

thing, of your chusing God to be your God; only a little that you may take notice of the order, and connexion of the words. You may find in the beginning of the Chapter, that holy *Joshua* now going the way of all the * Earth, having brought the Children of *Israel* into possession of the promised Land, just at his departure, gathers together the Representatives of the whole body of the people. v. 1. *And* Joshua *called for the Elders of Israel, and for their Heads, and for their Judges, and for their Officers,* and they *presented themselves before the Lord,* &c. and in a general convocation recites the whole Narative of God's dealing towards them *ab origine,* from their very Original, *i.e.* not only from the beginning of their being a Nation, but from the choice of *Abraham* their Father, (who was by descent, nation, and practice an Idolater before God cal'd him, *v.* 2, 3.) to that very day and time that he spake unto them. In the 14*th ver.* he gives them an exhortation, to behave themselves answer- *Chap.* 23. 14.

answerably to all those benefits bestowed upon them, in a suitable practice towards him. *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and in truth, and put away the gods which your Fathers served*, &c. and that he might the more effectually win upon them, he offers it as it were to their choice, v. 15. *and if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your Fathers served that were on the other side of the Flood or the gods of the* Amorites *in whose Land ye dwelt*, and closeth up the verse with his own holy resolution, — *but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord*; he proposeth to them others, if they thought they had deserved better of them, than God had, by what he had done for them. The people seem with indignation (as they had just cause) to answer, and utterly detest the motion: and therefore give their full assent to the service of God, on consideration of the mighty wonderful works he had wrought for them. *God forbid that*

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we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods, v. 16. and they rehearse his Works v. 17, 18. *for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our Fathers out of the Land of Egypt*, &c. thereupon they resolve, that they will serve the Lord only. Now *Joshua* again that he might the better fix them in this their assent and choice, tells them that they could not serve the Lord, for he is an holy God, v. 19. that is, as they ought if they did not forsake their sins, or other gods, and cleave to him stedfastly; then saith he, *ye cannot serve the Lord*, viz. acceptably, and well-pleasingly. Their reply, with full and joynt consent is reiterated v. 21. *they said nay, but we will serve the Lord.*

General scope of the words

The words of the Text do contain the ratification, and firm conclusion of the Covenant that is made between God and his People, upon the most solemn deliberation that can be expressed.

Particulars in the words

In them you may take notice of these two things, in particular.

I. There is *Joshua's* Propos al and Decla-

Declaration of a double act of this people:

1. Choice of God to be their God, ye have chosen you the Lord to serve him:

2. Their own witness to the act, *Ye are witnesses against your selves*; as if he should say, your own act and deed this day, shall be proof and evidence against you, if you decline from following the Lord in time to come, your own Consciences within you, and your own act and deed without you, shall testifie against you.

II. Here is the Peoples acceptance, and yielding to this proposal, wherein they do discover their unfeigned assent and consent to what *Joshua* said in the last words, *and they said we are Witnesses.*

Now the matter I shall cull out of these words to treat of, (passing by what else I might consider in them) is the act of this people, in chusing the Lord to be their God.

Doct. The Doctrine is this.

That God is, and God ought to be the choice of every good Christian.

O who will not ſay Amen to this Truth! Or take it thus; That it is the higheſt and greateſt duty of Chriſtianity, to chuſe God unto our ſelves; to chuſe the true God to be our God: ye have choſen you the Lord. The anſwer of the people before, and what is here ſaid of them, doth ſuit with the propoſal of *Joſhua* in the very letter, v. 15. *chuſe you this day, whom ye will ſerve*, &c. Here, and before they have made God their chief and only choice. *Ye are witneſſes againſt your ſelves, that ye have choſen the Lord to ſerve him.* This is fully expreſt in the Prophet *David's* words, who ſeems to have done the very ſame thing. *Pſal.* 16. 2. *Oh my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid to the Lord, thou art my Lord, my goodneſs extendeth not to thee. O my ſoul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord*, &c. the Prophet ſeems to entertain a ſoliloquy with his own ſoul, he had choſen God to be his God, and he was able to ſpeak it with the greateſt confidence to, and before God himſelf, which argues full aſſurance, *thou art my Lord*, and

and to this choice he had made of God, he was resolved to stick and stand, so far was he from chusing others, or being taken from God, that he would not make mention of them, or any thing that concerned them. v. 4. *Their sorrows shall be multiplyed that hasten after another God, their drink-Offering of Blood will I not offer, nor take their name into my lips.* So Gen. 28. 20, 21. *Jacob* was flying from his Brother *Esau*, and he said, *if God will give me bread to eat and rayment to put on, the Lord shall be my God*; if *Jacob* will take God to be his God upon the account of a little bread and water, and apparel, then surely we have greater encouragement to take him to be our God. The testimony of these two eminent Saints of God, are sufficient to prove the truth; besides the peoples act in the Text specified.

CHAP. II.

CHAP. II.

The first thing explained. What it is to chuse God, opened.

IN the explication of the Doctrine, I shall open these two things following.

First, I shall shew you what it is to chuse God to be ours.

And Secondly, why we are to chuse God to be ours.

First, what it is to chuse God to be ours, what is the intendment of it, and what it imports.

Here several things considerable; 1. Some things precedent. 2. Some things there are wherein the essence of the act consisteth. 3. And something that is the issue and product of it.

1. Somethings implyed as precedent.

I. The Choice of God doth imply a knowledg of God, that is a thing necessarily antecedent to eve-

ry choice, that thing cannot be chosen that is not known; so that the Soul that chuſeth God to be his, muſt know, not that God is only, but ſomething what he is alſo, according as he hath revealed himſelf in his holy Word. God hath laid himſelf open before us in the Word, as in a glaſs, and the only way to chuſe him, is by beholding of him by the eye of the underſtanding, enlightned by this Spirit of God, in this glaſs of the Goſpel. In all choices knowledg is prerequired. A man chuſeth not a perſon to be his Wife, that he knoweth not; no Woman chuſeth a man to be her Husband, whom ſhe knows not; a Perſon chuſeth nothing to be a portion, which he knoweth not; no more will the Soul chuſe God to be his God, that hath not acquaintance with him, whoſoever will chuſe him muſt have ſome knowledg of him.

II. There is required to a choice of God Converſe with, and ſome Experience of him. Therefore *Joſhua* rehearſeth here all that ever God had done for *Iſrael*, from the begin-

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ning to that day, in order to this Transaction between God and them. They had experience of God all their days, how much God had done for them. And *Joshua* here recals them on purpose to draw them on to chuse him, and fix them in their choice. Deliberation is required to every choice, and when a man doth deliberate, he doth consider of things, and thereby debates within himself about the object of his choice, and hereby he converseth with, and hath experience of it: so when a man by the view of God in the glass of the Word, deliberately considers, and apprehends the excellencies of God, above all other objects whatsoever; he becomes the more firmly fixed, and settled in his choice of him; rash choices are often repented of, therefore the word * here used, and rendred to chuse doth signifie to chuse upon proof and tryal: So that there must be in every person that chuseth God acquaint-

* בחר *Elegit, as a general doth Soldiers, for special service, of whose valour and skill he hath had prof.* Exod. 17. 9. P. I. Crit. Sacra.

ance with God, and experience of God; had we a little more Converse with God what experience should we have of him, and how should we chuse him! the more we Converse with God, the more shall we see, and know, and have experience of him, and consequently the more deliberately, and the more resolvedly chuse him.

III. Choice of God doth also imply a desire after, and a love to God; this is apparent in nature, a man will never chuse that against which he hath an enmity, or an Antipathy; a man will not chuse that meat, that he hath Antipathy against. Now there is never an one of us, but are naturally enemies to God, and are haters of God, *Rom.* 5. 10. with *Rom.* 1. 30. This people cannot endure to hear of, and will hardly believe, but so it is, Gods Word tells you so God's ministers tell you so, that you were born *enemies in your mind by wicked works*: and this is the great Command of God's Law, *to love the Lord our God with all our heart, &c.* Mat.

Mat. 22; and they that do not, will not chuſe him to be theirs: chuſing of God, and loving of God go together, *Iſa.* 56. 4. with 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord, to the Eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and chuſe the things that pleaſe me, &c.* ver. 6. *alſo the ſons of the ſtranger, that join themſelves to the Lord — to love the name of the Lord, &c.* what the heart is moſt of all ſet upon with deſire and love, that it doth chuſe: *Affection alwayes goeth before Election, and Election is the iſſue of Affection.* The heart muſt be ſet upon that which a man takes to himſelf to be his. *Iſa.* 26. 9. with 13. *With my Soul have I deſired thee in the night, &c.* 13. *other Lords have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name*, &c. If there be the leaſt diſguſt of the heart againſt, and loathing of any thing, never do we make choice of that to be ours: That we are ſo far from chuſing, that we cannot endure it, the affections are the ground, or beginning of the choice; when the heart is

drawn up in love toward God, and enamoured with desire after him, then it will chuse him. The choice is of the Heart, if that be alienated, their's no closure with, nor choice of any thing; so nor of God, if the heart be still alienated from him: *if we love him we chuse him.*

These three things are antecedaneous to the choice of God, do go before it; now there be two other things, wherein the very essence of the Act consists, and they are Election and Appropriation.

IV. The first of these (or the fourth in order to the former) is the Election, and preference of God above all: so that now all other things are neglected, and undervalued in Comparison with God; thus *David* said, Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire, in* Comparison of thee. *David* chose God because he had God in Esteem above all the World; *q. d.* Take all in heaven and Earth, yea Heaven and Earth themselves, whosoever will, so as I may have

God

God to be mine. Now doth thy Soul ſay ſo? ſo when Jeſus Chriſt is choſen by a Soul, *all things* elſe are but *droſs and dung in Compariſon of the Excellency of the knowledg of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. 3. 8, 9. It is a Chriſtians chief duty, and diſpoſition, eminently to prefer God and Chriſt above all. Remember, that *God is a Chriſtian's all, and his all is in God.* And a Soul that is in ſuch a frame chuſeth God aright.

V. (But the Second thing wherein the Souls actual choice conſiſteth), is Appropriation of God to a mans ſelf, a taking God to be his own, when we lay claim to God as our peculiar portion; as though there was no one that had intereſt in, nor relation to God but our ſelf only. So the Church, Pſal. 67. 6. *And God even our own God ſhall bleſs us.* I do not know any ſuch expreſſion through the Scripture as here, implying ſuch ſpecial Appropriation. When the Soul takes hold on God, receiveth him and embraceth him as his own peculiar, as if he was his own, and none's elſe beſide. The

Church seems so to speak, as if it was her peculiar privilege, and her's alone to appropriate, and claim God to her self. When a man can come to say God is my own God, then he hath chosen God indeed. So *David* Psal. 18. 1, 2. *I will love thee O Lord my strength, the Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my Salvation, and my High Tower.* How many *My's* be there? no less than eight or nine which the Prophet as so many terms of interest doth there use to express propriety: and as the Church saith elsewhere, *My beloved is mine, and I am his,* Song. 2. 6.

VI. Chusing of God consisteth as the issue of all this, in the rejection of all others besides God, when once God is chosen, then all other god's be cast away: this is according to what God himself doth call for and require. Hos. 3. 3. *And I said unto thee, thou shalt abide for me many days, thou shalt not play the Harlot, thou shalt not be for another,*

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so will I also be for thee: as God can't endure the soul should have any god besides him, but doth command the contrary; so neither will the Soul endure it. Just as a Virgin that hath many Suiters, when once her affections are set on the person whom she makes choice of, then away with all the rest, she will not converse with them any more; so it is here, if there be an indifferency in the affections to divers things, it's a sign the choice is not yet made, for the choice being once made, all other things are overlooked and refused, but ther's an indifferency still remaining where more than one is entertained, Psal. 81.9,10. *O Israel if thou wilt hearken unto me, there shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god: I am the Lord thy God.* They that have or will have God for theirs, must have no other to themselves but him: thus we see, wherein the chusing of God consisteth.

CHAP. III.

The second thing opened, viz. Why we are to chuse God to be ours.

HAving dispatched, and cleared the first thing in the Explication, we go on to the second. *viz.* Why it is the highest Duty of Christianity, to chuse God to be ours.

In general this is the only reason; because God is only Good; and this I shall branch out into these three particulars.

1. God is the chiefest Good.
2. God is a communicative Good.
3. God is the only satisfying Good.

Summum Bonum First, God is the chiefest, and best Good that can be, an undoubted Maxim, *God is all Good, and all Good is in God*; nothing is Good without God, and there is nothing Good to be found out of God: he is infinitely

finitely good, and no person or thing is good but God, *Luk.* 18.19. and this we know to be true in nature, that good is the proper object of the choice. Nothing is chosen but as far as it is Good, or appears to be so; if a man chuse that which is not really good, it is meerly from the misapprehension of the object; for men do not chuse that which is evil, as evil, but as it seems, or as it appears to be good; their apprehension of it to be good, provokes to a desire and choice of it. And he that knows God to be the chiefest Good, he it is that will chuse him above all to himself; the same *David* that said of God *thou art Good*, Psal. 119. 68. the same *David* said also, *thou art my Lord*, Psal. 16. 2. Psal. 4.6. *Many will say, who will shew us any Good?* that is worldly Goods, because they know no better; *but Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance, &c.* to this suits the *Etymology*, of the Greek word * αγαθὸς

* And τὸ ἀγαθὸν a ducendo, quia ducit & allicit nos ad sui expetitionem, Mag. in Arist. Eth. vel, ἀπὸ τῆ ἀγαπᾶσθαι, i.e. valde currendo, quia ad bonum valde currimus i. e. Expetimus. I sigh Crit sac. for

for good. Some take it as coming from a word which signifieth to draw, because it doth draw effectually to the desire of it, and others derive it from a word which signifieth running, because when once the Soul hath the apprehension of it, it will run swiftly after it; now God being the only real and chief God, he is the chief desire of every Soul that knows and apprehends him to be so.

Secondly, God is a Communicative Good, and so he is not chosen only for the Good that is in himself, (though chiefly therefore); but for the good that is communicated, and diffused daily from him unto us. The same *David* that said, thou art my Lord, said also, in the same *Psal.* 16. *The Lord is my portion*; further he said too, *thou art Good, and thou dost Good*, Psal. 119. This seems to be something of kin to that speech of *Jacob* expressing his choice of God. Gen. 28. *If the Lord will give me but bread to eat, and raiment to put on, the Lord shall be my God*; and that is the meanest of all these

good

good things: and if *Jacob* will take God for his upon such low terms, what should we do? what obligations do lie upon us to chuse him, who gives us Life, Breath, Being, Grace and Glory and all?

Thirdly, He is the only satisfying Good, therefore is he to be chosen; such a Good that will fill up the whole affection, and all the desires of the Soul, and nothing will satisfy it but God: the Soul till it come to God is never satisfied, nor at rest, no more than the Dove that fled from Noah's Ark, till it returned thither again. All created Goods are not satisfying Goods; though the Soul be a finite being, yet the desires be infinite, and therefore whatsoever it chuseth and resteth in, it will not be satisfyed, till it come to God who is infinite. Psal. 63. 1. *My Soul thirsteth for thee, yea my flesh longeth for thee,* ——2. *to see thy power and thy glory:* When it enjoys God, then it says as he, ver. 5. *My Soul is satisfyed as with Marrow and Fatness*—— ver. 6. *when I remember thee on my bed,* &c.

It

It is God's mercy and goodness alone, that can satisfy which way soever it comes, whether he communicates it mediately by his Ordinances, here on Earth, or immediately from himself in heaven: Here in his ordinances, Psal. 65. 4. *Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts, he shall be satisfied with the Goodness of thy house, &c. O satisfy us early with thy mercy.* Psal. 90. 14. *I will satiate the Soul of the Priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with Goodness,* saith the Lord, *Jer.* 31. 14. so hereafter, *when I awake* (in the morning of the resurrection) *I shall be satisfyed with thy likeness;* saith *David*, Psal. 17. 15. other things satisfy not, riches will not satisfie, the eye is not satisfied with riches. *Eccles.* 4. 8. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfyed with silver, nor he that loveth abundance. *Eccl.* 5. 10. The great plea with which the Lord Jesus Christ Expostulateth with Souls is Isa. 55. 2. *Why do you spend your*

money

money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which ſatisfieth not? It is God and he alone is the Souls only ſatisfaction, therefore chuſe him.

Before I paſs to the uſe, I ſhall for the further evident proof of this that God is the only Soul-ſatisfying Good, propoſe to you the Experience of two perſons, who found ſuch ſatisfaction in God, even in this life, that it might be effectual to draw our affections to chuſe him above all to our ſelves. And the one is of Mr. *John Welch*, a Scotch Miniſter, who beſides his continued enjoyment of Communion with God, eſpecially, * During his Sickneſs, was ſo filled, and overcome with the ſenſible enjoyment of God, that he was ſometime overheard in prayer, to have theſe words. Lord, hold thy hand, It is enough, thy ſervant is a clay-veſſel, and can hold no more; ſuch large manifeſtations he had of God to his Soul, which gave him full ſatisfaction.

* *The fulfilling of the Script.* P. 429.

And

And * Another said, It is enough Lord, it is enough: my Soul is not able to receive, such an exceeding weight of joys in this life. Do not these words of these persons evidently declare, the abundant Satisfaction that is to be had in God, even here? besides that fulness of joy and Satisfaction that there is to be had in him, and from him, in the life to come? there is then Satisfaction to be had in God, and who would not chuse such a God as this is?

* *Xaverius clamabat, ſ is eſt Domine, ſatis eſt; nec enim mens mea in hac vita tantum gaudiorum pondus capit,* A. Lap. in Cant. 2. 3.

CHAP. IV.

The Application entred on; first Use of Information.

The Truth being cleared and confirmed, the next thing that follows is, the putting of it to a due use & improvement in our lives and practices.

Use

Use 1. Information. *Use 1. Information.*

This doth discover to us, the great and indispensible duty of all men, even of all people that mean to be happy; Especially of all that profess themselves to be the people of God, and that is to chuse God to be theirs. How hard a matter it is to be perswaded to it, or convinced of the necessity of it! this is the great question you are to put to your Souls, have I yet chosen God to be mine? Reader, what dost thou say in this Case? What answer doth thine heart give, to this most important query proposed? Have you yet chosen God to be yours or not? Oh Christians! if I might be but instrumental in this great Work, in causing your hearts and affections to embrace and chuse God, what a work would this be! It is a very hard matter to be made to believe any of these truths, that God is so infinitely good in himself, and Satisfactorily good to the souls of his people, and therefore eminently to be chosen by them; but believe it every one, thou art not a Christian indeed,

indeed, thou art not, canst not be happy, till thou hast chosen God to be thine. What is it to be baptized, and to have an outward profession, if thou art not, and will not come up to this, to have and chuse God to be thine, to take God to be thine own? Canst thou be a godly man that hath not chosen God to be thy God? It's an impossible thing that a man should be Godly, that hath nothing to do with God. Is not a Godly man named from God? Here is the essence of Christianity: and there is no real Christianity (whatsoever the profession be) till this be done. Do not you be so foolish, as to content your selves with the paint of Religion and seeming to be Christians, if you have not taken God to be yours, you have nothing to do with him, and you are not Christians indeed. That man that hath not chosen God for his God, hath not yet learned the first Commandment in a practical way. What is that? Why, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*, Exod. 20. and so he is no

no servant of God: this commands thee to chuse God to be thy God, and him only, and art thou a Christian, that art not practically come up to, much less taken out the very first rule in the Law of God? I dare say thou darest not say it.

CHAP. V.

Exhortation Double: First, To them that have not yet done this, and shewing what we ought to chuse God to be to us.

THe 2. Use of this truth is by way of Exhortation, Double: 2. *The Exhort.*

1. To them that have not chosen God.

2. To them that have done so.

Use of Exhortation.

I. To them that have not chosen God to be their God, that are yet to make their choice. And alas! how

how many are there yet so to do! how many! be perswaded all in the name of God to do what is proposed to you, to chuse God to be yours. Christians, are you in good earnest Christians or are you not? Will you chuse God? are you resolved to have him to be yours?

Here 3 things briefly opened.

1. What we are to chuse God to be to us?

2. How we are to chuse God to be ours.

3. Several motives to provoke hereunto.

1. Under what notion we are to chuse God to us, or what we are to chuse him to be unto us.

1. To be in all relations to us.

2. To be in stead of all enjoyments to us.

1. We are to chuse God to stand in all relations to us. What relations?

I. Generally; chuse him to be our friend, 'tis Good having God to be a friend, make in to him therefore, and make suit to him to be

be your friend, *Whosoever hath chosen God to be his, hath chosen the best friend in Heaven and Earth.* He is the ablest, faithfullest, freest, richest friend that is in this or in another World; none so bountiful, and ready to help as he; and did we believe it, we should easily be perswaded to it: when the Church had chosen Christ to be her beloved, then he was her friend; *this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem.* Song. 5. 16. So *Abraham* when he had chosen God to be his, he was his friend, *and he became the friend of God.* James. 2. the Church of the Jews cal'd *the seed of Abraham my Friend,* Isa. 41. 8. Be you therefore perswaded, let me beseech you, to chuse God to be your chief friend.

II. More particularly; chuse God to be to you a Father: God is the Father of all by creation; but we cast off that relation daily, by our transgression, and rebel against him; though sometimes we say, *our Father* with our mouths, yet how vain is this! for where is his honour

that

that we give him? *Mal.* 1. 6. just as the prodigal cast off, and run away from his Father, *Luk.* 4 15. But when we are regenerate, and born again of God, then we chuse God for our Father again, and he adopts us to be his Children. The new *Divine nature* laies a new claim to the old (though formerly lost) relation: As the prodigal did, *I will go to my Father*, ver. 18. and bespeaks God; as the Church, Isa. 63. 16. *Doubtless thou art our Father.* We are Commanded to call no man Father upon Earth, Mat. 23. (understand it in a right sense not as though we were to cast off our natural relations, as some wickedly do); *For that we have one to be our Father, which is in heaven*, who hath promised that he will be *a Father to us, and we shall be his Sons and Daughters*, 2 Cor. 6. 17. and therefore, well may we, and of Duty ought to chuse him to be so unto us.

III. Chuse God to be an Husband to you; this God offers himself most willingly to be, but we keep him

off and will not yield our Conſent, as a Virgin doth a Suiter a long time that comes to her; how hard a matter to get the Soul eſpouſed to God, and Chriſt! It is not ſo hard a matter to get the Lord's Conſent to be an Husband, as to get ours to become his Spouſe. How long and painful a work is it for the Miniſters of the Goſpel to be wooing for Chriſt, and to be beſeeching in Chriſt's name, before they can get the conſent of one Soul to be married to him! Jer. 3. 14. *Turn O backſliding Children, for I am married unto you.* God ſaith, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in Judgment, and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies. I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs*; three times together. Hoſ. 2. 19, 20. but we are very loath, we will not be betrothed, we can't be won to yield to it. God is our maker, and ſaith further, *Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hoſts is his name*, Iſa. 54. 5. What will you not have your Maker

Maker for your Husband? What better Husband can there be?

IV. Chuse God to be your Lord and Master; so much is implyed as our duty in the Text, *ye have chosen you the Lord to serve him:* other Lord's do and have ruled over us, and Oh that we were brought to the resolution of the Church, *but by thee only will we make mention of thy name,* Isa. 26. 13. which implies a choice of God, and a rejection of others. Be perswaded to cast off all other Lords, World, and Flesh, and Devil; take his yoke upon you, enter into Covenant, every one to be his servant, as the Eunuch did, Isa. 56. 6. say as *David* Psal. 116. 16. *Oh Lord, truly I am thy servant: I am thy servant*: our duty is to chuse God, and Christ to rule, govern, and have dominion over us, to *be our leader, and Commander,* Isa. 55. 4. let him be our onely Lord, to serve him, and worship him according as we are bound, *Psal.* 45. 11. Obey no Commands, but what are agreeable to his Commands, he is our prin-

principal, and chief Master, whose Word we are to conform unto.

2. As we are to chuse God to be in all relations to us, so we are to chuse him to be instead of all enjoyments to us.

1. As our portion, so we should chuse him: so did the Church, Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my Soul:* Then was a fit time to say so, and chuse him to be so, when she had nothing left in her captive estate. So saith *David*, Psal. 16. 5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance*: * Word for word, the part of my part, or portion of my portion, to shew that God was his only part or portion. There are two words of like import, to shew that he chose God to be altogether a portion to him; to which purpose we may observe, that God that is call'd the God of Israel, is call'd *the portion of Jacob*, Jer. 10. 16, &c.

* מנת־חלקי *pars partis, sive portio portionis mea, junguntur hic duo synonyma auxeseos causa*, q. d. *omnimoda pars mea.*

51. 19. * Because other nations chusing other gods to themselves, the Lord opened their eyes that they should chuse him only; in which regard he is call'd *the portion and inheritance of Aaron*, Numb. 18. 29. who was to have no inheritance amongst the rest of the Israelites in *Canaan*. What a rejoycing should this be to every Christian, who hath no portion nor inheritance in the World, in the meanest and lowest Condition in the world, who yet hath, and hath chosen the Lord for his portion! *Eliphaz* tells *Job chap.* 22. 25. the Almighty shall be thy defence; Marg. thy Gold: For so it may be rendered, as by * some it is; He shall be to thee instead of treasures of Gold and Silver; if thou shalt want Gold, thou shalt have what is far more precious than Gold, *viz.* God himself. We are apt to chuse and

* *Quia aliis gentibus alios sibi Deos optantibus, Deus horum oculos aperuit ut se eligerent.* M.P. Syn. Crit. ex Riv.

* בצריך *vel angustiis tuis, vel arx roboris tui, vel aurum lectissimum.* I. T. i. e. *si desit aurum obtinebis quod pretiosius eo est.* n. *Deum.* M.P. Syn.

and ſo to make Gold our God, whereas God ſhould be unto us inſtead of, yea above all the Gold in the World, which uſually men make their chief portion.

2. In ſum to ſhut up all, we ſhould chuſe God to be unto us, as our All in All, our only Bleſſedneſs in this life, and that to come. It is propheſied of a people, (and is it not all our duty?) Iſa. 65. 16. even of the Gentiles, *That he who bleſſeth himſelf, ſhal bleſs himſelf in the God of truth*; viz. in apprehending, and appropriating to themſelves God as theirs, they ſhould look on themſelves as the moſt bleſſed people, (as juſtly they may) in all the World. There is no condition, that a man can account to himſelf as a Bleſſed condition, but when he hath God to be his God, he may ſing and rejoice in God (as though, yea) better than though he had all the World; he is, and he hath all, and whoſoever hath God to be his hath indeed all, and therein is bleſſed. It is a kind of Happineſs, if our garners be full of

all manner of store, if sheep bring forth thousands, if that our oxen may be strong to labour; Happy is the people that is in such a case, Psal. 144. 15. with, 13, 14. i. e. they may in a kind, and in a degree be said to be happy: But then the Prophet adds the surmounting Happiness; *Yea, happy is that people,* (and so that person,) *that hath the Lord for their God.*

CHAP. VI.

Shewing how we are to chuse God to be ours.

THe Second thing we are to open; is, How we are to chuse God to our selves, to be ours.

1. Chuse him really, not feignedly, and in outward shew onely; there be a great many that lay claim to God, and say God is mine, yet are they most prosane, and abominable; they seem to own God with their mouths but deny him in their

their works and lives, as those mentioned, Tit. 1. 16. *In works they deny him, being disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* Even as those whom our saviour taxeth, Luk. 6. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and will not do the things that I say?* Just so we read of some that *call God Father*, and *yet do as evil things as they could*, Jer. 3. 4, 5. whom the Lord reproves, as he doth to the same purpose the priests, Mal. 1. 6. *If I am a Father where is my honour? if I am a Master where is my Fear?* They seem to take God to be theirs in some of the forementioned relations; yet for all that, their deeds and speeches are as evil as can be. *With their lips they shew much love, but their hearts are after their Covetousness*, Ezek. 33. With their lips only it is, and no more, not with their heart; they chuse him with their lips, but refuse him and cast his law behind their backs, in their lives.

2. Chuse him wholly to be yours, that is, chuse him as he offers himself to us, and as he is set forth

in all the relations the Scripture makes mention of him to us; not only in those Comfortable Relations which imply our privilege, but those honourable ones also, which imply and engage us to our duty; not to be a Friend, a Father, and an Husband only; but a Master, Lord, and King also.

3. Chuse him freely to be your God, not out of Force. Many seem to be willing to chuse God, but it is when they must of necessity leave the World; when they come to die and they cannot of necessity avoid it, they can be without him no longer: If they could have the World in health, and strength one day longer they would let God alone, till such a time as death did indeed come. How great many of people never desire to acquaint themselves with God, desire him not, chuse him not, or get any interest in Christ, till they come to die, then seem to look after and chuse him for theirs! They neglect, and refuse God in all his offers of grace vouchsafed to them all their lives; but

but when they must part with all the World, whether they will or not, then at the hour of death will be seemingly forward to chuse him. But they that chuse him truely, chuse him freely.

4. Chuse God chiefly, let God be preferr'd before all, nothing before him. If God be preferr'd as he deserves, so it will be; He will be set before every thing in heaven or Earth. Let God be your chief desire, *your exceeding Joy, as* Psal. 43. 4. word for word, the gladness or my Joy: Two Synonima's or words of like import (as before) to signifie the fulness of his Joy in God, or the excellency of his Joy in God, above all other Joys; no Joy in the World that *David* had like to the Joy that he had in God. As the Church had chosen Christ to be her beloved, and she preferred him *as the chiefest of ten thousand*, Song. 5. 30. שמחת גילי.

5. Chuse God only, if we can have nothing else with him, or besides him, yet let us chuse him only; he is God only, Good only, as

well as chiefly, and so let us chuse him; let God be chosen, though we let all go to have him, and to keep our hold fast of him. We do not know what times we may see, when we must part with all things; and if we be Christians, as we have chosen, so we must keep close to (bear with the expression) a naked God, or God alone, without any thing else, as many, *of whom the world was not worthy*, have done before us.

6. Chuse God for himself, have no Sinister end in chusing of him, not for any external thing he brings with him (as he never comes alone,) but only for his own Excellencies. What Excellencies are there in him! if we did but view them, according as they are displaied in the Word, what an attractive vertue might they have to draw our hearts to chuse him! we must not chuse God, as men chuse Wives, and Women chuse Husbands, for the most part for what they have, not for themselves; more for their estates, than for their persons: he that chuseth

God

God for any thing besides God himself, chuseth not God indeed, but that other thing in his Stead; he doth not chuse God chiefly, and he that doth not chuse him chiefly, doth indeed not chuse him at all, but refuse him.

CHAP. VII.

Proposing several Motives to provoke us hereunto.

HAving dispatched the two foregoing particulars, I come now to treat of the third, *viz.* to propose to you some moving considerations, to stir you up to this so important a Duty: and give me leave in a few words to expostulate with you, about this matter of so great Consequence.

I. Motive. Now first consider what offers God hath made, and doth still make of himself unto you. If you look on me to speak in Gods name to you, then this is the

the work that I have to do now, to offer God to every one of your choice; If you will be prevailed with to chuse him. This is the work of the ministry of the Gospel to offer God and Christ according to the tenour of the Covenant of grace: How doth he display his glorious excellencies in the Gospel, to prevail with people to accept of him and embrace him! is not this the sum of every Sermon? God saith in every Sermon chuse me: is not this the intent of the Covenant of Grace which we daily preach, *I will be your God, I am thy God, &c?* as much as if God should say, I offer my self to you, chuse me to be your God, and I am yours. This is the sum of the Covenant, and the meaning of those words: God and the World stand by the Soul, just as two Suiters to a person whom they are wooing, and are not we ready to joyn with, and chuse the World rather than God? yea have we not often refused God for the World? Oh Brethren! I beseech you that we may lay

lay it to heart; hath not God ſtretched out his hand a long time, *and no man regards? how oft hath he called, and yet hath been refuſed?* Prov. 1. 24. and doth he not ſay to us as he did to Iſrael? Iſa. 65. 1. *I ſaid, behold me, behold me to a nation* (and ſo to a perſon or people) *that was not called by my name.* And may he not go on to upbraid us as he doth there v. 2. *I have ſpread out my hands all the day-long, unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts?* Surely methinks God ſaith to every Soul the ſame words, and yet how hard a matter to win aSoul to be drawn to chuſeGod,to be eſpouſed and betrothed to Jeſus Chriſt!

II. Motive. Conſider how long God hath done this.How long have you lived? and how many Sermons have you heard? even ſo long and ſo often hath God offered himſelf to you: how long have you been a diſobedient and a gainſaying people! though God hath ſtretched out his hand! *Rom.* 10. 21. may

not

not God's messengers say? yea may not God himself say? they will not be prevailed with, Rev. 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door, I will come in, and Sup with him, and he with me.* Though Christ be kept out all day-long, till Supper time; yet if the door be then opened, he will Come in, & Sup (converse) with the Soul: yet for all that, though he so far condescends, how many persons be there that will not open the door, as not all the day long, so nor yet at night neither! the worse will be their condition one day: in how many Sermons, and Sabbaths hath God offered himself to be your God, and yet ye have not chosen him to be your God to this day! and will not this come upon account against you another day, if you still continue to refuse? Certainly it will.

3. Mot. Consider, they are no hard terms that God stands upon with us, but that we may chuse him and embrace him. And if they be hard he can make them easy, and ena-

enable us to perform them; and to be sure they be all for our best Good and advantage. What be they? the terms be, that you forsake the World, Flesh, and Devil, and is not this for thy best advantage? nay but is it not? Stand, and Pause alittle about it; no man is able to gainsay this. It is true, of himself no man can do this, but God can impower us to renounce them, *and to say to every idol, get thee hence*; as it is propheſied, *Isa.* 30. 22. And becauſe the terms are not impoſſible, nor unprofitable, but for our advantage; therefore we ſhould not ſtick at them, but chuſe the Lord to us. The advantage is much every way: the caſting off the things to be forſaken for him is advantageous; and the chuſing of God himſelf to us is much more for our advantage: the forſaking of them is of great Good, in that it removeth from us that which is of greateſt prejudice to us, and the choice of God is the choice of the chief Good: So that here is the removal of the greateſt loſs, and alſo

Damnum ceſſans; Lucrum emergens.

also there accrueth the greatest gain. So then they are not hurtful, nor prejudicial terms that are required of us at all, nor shall we fail of fulfilling the terms, unless it be through our own default; God will enable us, that we seek it of him. If a man did offer me a gift, upon such terms as I was never able to accomplish, I should think that he did it, but to deceive and befool me; but that person that offers me a kindness, upon such terms, that he will make me capable of enjoying it, I have just cause to think he is in good earnest: So it is with God; God can and will enable the Soul to reject all else, whereby it may be capable of chusing, and enjoying him. He can give us, & assist us to do whatsoever is requisite in order to our acceptance of him; and further I shall add in the close of this, that it is impossible without these, or upon any other terms to chuse him, or have him to be ours; no having and cleaving to the World, Flesh and Devil, and yet having and chusing God to be ours too. You cannot

keep

keep the former, odious, & unclean Trinity, and chuse and take to you the blessed and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; *No man can have, nor serve two Masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Mat. 6. 24.

4. Mot. Shall I say to you that you do not know what you chuse, when you do chuse God to be yours? I may well say so; for you do not know what you do chuse, as to the benefit and advantage there is by him. You know not your own priviledg thereby; every one must say as Christ of *Mary*, Luk. 10. 42. *Mary hath chosen the better part*: he that hath chosen the best, and chiefest Good, hath chosen the *best part*, and therefore I will say again, you do not know what you chuse, when you chuse God; for

(1.) He that chuseth God to be his chuseth Life; God is the living God, and God is *our Life and the length of our days*. Remember as you

you would chuſe life for your Souls, chuſe God to be your portion; there is life, and life to be had only in him, and will you not be prevailed with, for life's ſake to chuſe him?

(2.) *God* is light, and he that chuſeth *God* chuſeth the light; and who that is wiſe would not chuſe the light rather than darkneſs? He is as he is call'd, *the light of Iſrael*, Iſa. 10. 17. *The Lord is my light and my Salvation*, Pſal. 27. 1. *God is Light and in him is no darkneſs at all*, 1. Joh. 1. and *God* is ſaid to *be the Father of Lights*, James. 1. 17. Yea *God* is a Sun, in whom is concentered all the light, *Pſal.* 84. 11. who would not chuſe to be in the Sun-ſhine of his Face? Eccleſ. 11. 7. *Truely the light is Sweet, and it is a pleaſant thing for the eyes to behold the Sun*; if ſo pleaſant to *behold the created Sun*, as who would not chuſe the Sun to ſhine, and to give light? who is it that would not behold the light of the uncreated Sun of Righteouſneſs? whoſe light would be more refreſh-

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ing, than ten thouſand Suns ſhining in their ſtrength.

(3.) *God* is an exceeding great reward, *Gen.* 15. 1. what a reward do God's people chuſe in chuſing him to be theirs? God is he that will abundantly recompenſe thy affection to him, and all thine obedience to him, all your rejoicing in him, and eſtimation of him. Whatſoever of theſe you have manifeſted to him, *God* will requite you, ſeven, nay an hundred-fold: every duty that you have performed, *God* will recompence it; all the pleaſure you have taken in him, and whereinſoever you have denied your ſelves any thing for him, *God* will make it up many-fold in this life, yea here, and hereafter too. And who would not chuſe ſuch a *God* to be his *God*, who is ſuch a great reward!

In ſhort what may I ſay more, he that chuſeth God chuſeth All at once, and I think no man will deny this to be the beſt choice. A man that chuſeth God, is like one that labours to graſp All at one gripe.

Even

Even as that devout Nobleman of France said, in return to his Friend, which sent a letter to him, in which were inserted these Words, *Deus meus & Omnia*, My God and my all; you invite me thereby to return the same to you, and to all Creatures, *my God and my All, my God and my All, my God and my All*: Be it known unto you therefore, that he is *my God and my All*; and if you doubt of it, I shall speak it an hundred times over, I shall add no more; for any thing else is superfluous, to him that is truely penetrated, possessed with, and assured of *my God and my All*, &c. Oh that thousands more had made (and could assure themselves that they had made) this choice! that they might an hundred times over say with the same confident assurance; *my God and my All.*

Monsieure de Renti.

5. Mot. Consider, how freely God chuseth you, and would, had ye hearts to chuse and embrace him; and will you not answer God in his choice? there is no such hard matter to prevail with him, for his choice

choice and acceptance of us, all the difficulty is on our side. Shall not we be as ready to chuse him, if he be so free to chuse us? he would chuse us, if we were not backward and unwilling; yea though altogether unwilling, how doth he draw the heart, and makes us willing in the day of his power! which shews his superabundant grace, so freely dispensed to us, in fixing his choice on us, till he hath prepared our hearts, not only to a fixed resolution, but to an actual choice of him.

6. Mot. As an improvement of the former, Consider, if you chuse God, this will evidence to you that God hath chosen you unto himself from all eternity; for your choice of God in time, is but a fruit of his fore-choice of you: therefore I must say as, 1. Joh. 4. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.* So we chuse him; because he first chose us: So our Saviour saith very suitable to this purpose, Joh. 15. 16. *Ye have not chosen me* (that is first) but

but I have chosen you. Observe this, that that person that God hath chosen from all eternity, will, and shall in time chuse *God* to be his *God*; and he that doth in time chuse God to be his God, was from all eternity, before the Foundation of the World was laid, chosen to be one of God's people. Oh who would not make sure of this to himself, and manifest this before all the World, that he hath chosen, and that he is chosen of *God* to be of the number of his peculiar people!

7. Mot. Again, Consider yet further, that whatever there is that may provoke to a choice, is most eminently to be found in God: If beauty, honour, greatness, riches, faithfulness, blessedness, love, importunity, may be sufficient motives to prevail with us to chuse God, here's enough of all these; and how could I wish for the understanding, and tongue, and pen of the highest Angel, that I may apprehend and express, such deep things of God as these be! 1. If the person

son be a beauty that is a Suiter, how is he doted upon! Oh the beauty of holiness that is in the face of *God*! the glorious beauty of ten thousand Suns, shining in their noon-day Splendour, can't match the brightness that shines in his face continually. How earnestly did the Prophet both desire, and seek after the beauty of the Lord! *Psal.* 27. 4. 2. If an honourable person makes choice of, and sues to a person of mean extraction, how soon do the affections seem to comply? *David* tells us, that he would speak of the glorious honour of his Majesty, *Psal.* 145. 5. he is clothed with honour, and majesty, *Psal.* 104. 1. 3. If Greatness will prevail on us, *God's* Greatness is unsearchable, *Psal.* 145. 3. who can praise him according to his excellent greatness! *Psal.* 150. 2, 4. If riches; Oh the unsearchable riches of his grace! *Eph.* 3. 8. 5. If faithfulness will do? how faithful are all his promises! how many Suiters come with fair pretences, and promises, with great shewes of riches, greatness, and honour,

nour, yet altogether insignificant! but *God* will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, *Psal.* 89. 6. If wisdom, none will chuse (if possible) a fool to himself; now *God* is the only wise *God*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. 7. If love, how great is the love wherewith he hath loved us! *Eph.* 2. 4. 8. If patience will at last prevail, Oh the riches of his goodness, and long-suffering, and patience! how many refusals, and put-offs hath he born at our hands! which yet shall never be laid to our charge, no nor cast in our teeth, if at last we are prevailed with to chuse, and give our Consent to him. 9. If importunity, who hath used more! how oft hath he besought us by his ministers, by his word, Spirit, mercies, menaces, what not? 10. If Blessedness, Oh the infinite glorious, eternal Blessedness of God! *Psal.* 119. 12. Is he not *God blessed for ever?* Rom. 5. he is the blessed, and the blessing of God, the Fountain of all blessedness. O at last let some, or all these things prevail with you, to chuse him to be your God!

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And as much as God is before all these things, and these eminent perfections are more conspicuous in him than in all other besides him, so much we should be the more effectually prevailed with, speedily, without debate or delay to chuse him, before any of them all.

8. Mot. Consider, moreover, if you chuse God to be your God, you shall be sure here to enjoy your choice, which as it is the best, and most blessed enjoyment of all in Heaven or Earth; so whatsoever we chuse elsewhere, we may miss of, and go without the enjoyment of it; as well if it be a mean thing, as if it be the more excellent in and among these low contemptible things of this world; yea and of the lowest of them we cannot chuse and take: But I dare in the name of God, to make this offer to any person whomsoever, that if he chuse really, and unfeignedly God to be his *God*, as he ought, chuse him and take him; chuse him and he will become thine, thou hast him as thine own, and shalt enjoy

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and possess all the Good that is in him, as thine own peculiar treasure, if thou chuse him and embrace him. We cannot wish & have, chuse and possess, in these matters of this World; if so, who would not be in a far better estate than he is and can be? if a poor maid would chuse the King for her husband, she might go without him; or if a poor man chuse a great mans estate, he might go without it: but if the poorest, and [unworthiest Soul shall chuse his maker for his husband, he shall have him. *I will betroth thee unto me,* &c. Hos. 2. and whosoever will chuse the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ for his portion, the Kingdom of God for his, the inheritance of the Saints in light for his mansion, may enjoy them. Here you may certainly chuse and take by choice; you may get interest in, nay possession of whatsoever you make choice of to your selves: here is no failure, nor frustration of your affection and Election; and will not this prevail with you?

9. Mot.

9. Mot. Yet once more, Consider, that if you make choice of God for your God, you make choice of that can never be taken away from you: whatsoever you chuse of the World, either is perishing in it self, or is subject to be made a prey, and a Spoil unto others, even the worst of persons; all Worldly treasures, if we could chuse and have them, are subject to the moth or rust, or else the thief may steal them, and so take them away; either they breed that will destroy themselves, or else others may destroy us for them, or if not so, they may at least take them violently away from us; if you chuse Gold, that will be gone, if Silver that may be taken away, if riches they *Take themselves wings, and flee away as an Eagle towards Heaven*; and how swift is that! *Prov.* 23. 5. but if you chuse God, he can never be taken away, God will never take himself away. It is true God is pleased sometimes to withdraw himself, and to hide his face, but yet never takes himself a- *Mat.* 6.

way from any Soul that hath chosen him, and whom he hath chosen; and none else can take him away, Devils, nor men, can never rob us of God, whatsoever they may, or do take from us.

10. Mot. Lastly consider, that if you continue to refuse, and will not make choice of him to be your God, take heed that he doth not reject you, and cast you off for ever; if we refuse him now, beware that he refuse us not hereafter, when we would: Is not this the trouble of persons, when they are awakened & made sensible! come to them and ask them, whether they do not think that God is willing to receive them? they reply; Ay, but have not I neglected the offers of his Grace too long; so that God will not now be reconciled, and become mine though I do chuse him? If he stand at the door, and knock, and we will not open, time may come, that we may stand at his door too, and knock, and he not open unto us. *Prov.* 1. 24. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I stretched out my hand, and no*

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man regarded, and would none of my reproof: ver. 28. *They ſhall call upon me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early and ſhall not find me, becauſe they would not chuſe the fear of the Lord.* So Zech. 7. 11. *As I called and they would not hear, ſo they ſhall call and I will not hear, ſaith the Lord.* Mat. 23. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as an Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but ye would not; therefore your houſe is left unto you deſolate.* God utterly caſt off the Jews, becauſe they would not chuſe him, nor cloſe with his tenders; let us take heed, leſt if we ſtand off till too late, he may reject us for ever.

Now lay all theſe things together, and ſee, whether they will not work upon your Spirits, to chuſe God to be your God! Oh let not the tenders of Grace be alwayes in vain! but let God prevail with you while it is call'd to day.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing reproof to them that do not, will not chuse God.

BEfore I pass unto the second branch of the Exhortation: give me leave to subjoin here a few words of Reproof, to them that will not be prevailed with so to do.

Use of reproof. Use. Reproof here is to all (I had almost said, but to all) those persons that are negligent and careless in this Duty, what shame, and censure, yea indeed Condemnation are they worthy of, that do not, will not chuse God, but refuse him; and how many are there that may justly be charged with this guilt! this is the sin of the most in the World at this day, and that God's own people, that are a professing people should be guilty of it, is a very sad thing. This seems to be God's

God's charge on his Iſrael; Pſal. 81. 8. *Hear O my people, and I will teſtifie unto thee, O Iſrael, if thou wilt harken unto me.* 10. *I am the Lord thy God, &c. But my people would not harken to my voice, and Iſrael * would none of me,* had none to me, they would not accept of my offer, or my counſel, they would not yield, nor aſſent to have me to be their *God,* they would not be perſwaded to deſire ſuch a thing as this, or to obey my voice. Which is always a concomitant, and evidence of the ſame, reſolve on the contrary, that they will not have him to rule over them, chuſe any thing rather than him. As the Jews, *denyed the holy one, and the Juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto them,* Acts. 3. 14.

* לא אבהלי *Noluit me. Non aſſenſit (cum ל) mihi Pi. non accepit ſuaſionem a me.* M. P. Syn. Crit.

Having already reaſoned with you, and argued the caſe about it, to provoke, and move you to take God to be yours, let us here ſee, and

take notice of what may be the reason of this great unwillingness.

First, one reason may be, Ignorance of him, they know him not: many times where persons are put to their choice, they are apt to chuse the worst, because they know not the difference between things, nor the excellency of one thing above another. Men do not like, nor chuse him, because they never * *have seen him, nor known him.* Oh the Ignorance of God that reigneth in the World! if men had the offer of a worldly estate, a rich, well-situated farm, here they were in their element, here they knew what to say, and here quickly would they make a free choice; but because *The natural man understandeth not the things of God, being spiritually discerned,* and they still carnal, they have not an eye to see, nor yet an understanding to apprehend his excellencies; but as it was said of the Jews, to the same Purpose, *They saw no beauty nor comeliness in him, wherefore they should desire him.* The worldlings eyes are holden that they can-

* 1 *Joh.* 3. 6.

1 *Cor.* 2 14.

Isa. 53. 2.

cannot know him. *Luk.* 24. 16. they perceive any thing more pretious, and desirable than the Almighty, and therefore are they ready to say, *Who is the Lord* that they should chuse him * ? *let him depart from us, for we desire not the knowledg of his wayes.* *Exod.* 5. 2. *Job* 21. 14.

Secondly, Others have prejudices against God and Christ, they think there is but little to be gotten by him; nay, they may think of all things to be parted with for him, and consulting with flesh and blood, may imagine that the gain will scarcely quit the cost, if they should embrace and chuse him to them; they may think him an hard master, and having such hard thoughts of him, will never chuse him. What profit said they *Job.* 21. if they chuse to serve him? *What can the Almighty do for them?* Job 22. 17.

Thirdly, Others have enmity in their hearts against God; so that they can blaspheme God, and curse God, and deny God, and so vent and breath out their hatred of him, but they have not one good

thought of, nor motion towards God.

To close this, I add a short expostulation and ejaculation.

But why blind Soul, will not thou be prevailed with? Canst thou shew any just reason or excuse for thy refusal; were thine eyes opened, surely thou wouldest run like the Roe, and the Hinds of the Fields after him. Thou lookest into a naughty glass, that misrepresents God to thee, stay a little and look into one glass yet, which it may be thou never hitherto didst look into, even the glass of his Word, and blessed Gospel: could but one ray of his excellency dart it self into thy heart, thou wouldest with both hands earnestly lay hold on him; How quickly wouldest thou open thy heart to let him in! and he would become the desire of thy Soul!

Oh Blessed God, wilt thou ever suffer such poor Creatures to turn their back upon thee! still to hold fast their wickedness, and always to let thee go? how long wilt thou suffer them

them to belch out their malice against thee, to thy very face, who art so infinitely glorious in Holiness? how long shall they be spitting their Venom thus at thee? When shall they learn to chuse thee the chief Good, & refuse the evil? When wilt thou encline their hearts to thee? Oh Lord, pluck off the Scales from their eyes, perswade their obdurate hearts, that at last they may chuse thee the Lord to them, that they may love the name of the Lord, and be his Servants, and chuse the things that please thee, and take hold of thy Covenant! Lord, let the reading of these few lines prevail with one heart, if it please thee, to take hold of thee! Oh, that one Soul by this my weak labour, might be brought to chuse and embrace thee, and to say with Thomas, *my Lord, and my God*!

CHAP. IX.

Coutaining the second Exhortation, to them that have chosen God to them.

Use 2 Exhort. 2. Use of Exhortation.

HEre follows in the second place, Exhortation to all them that have made choice of God to themselves, to be their God, as I hope many that heard it, and there are also many that read this that have done it. Oh your infinite happiness that have made this choice! all that God is is yours, and all God hath is yours. I stand astonished, in the very Admiration of the portion of that person, that hath chosen God to be his God, and so may every Soul: What hath not God? and what cannot God do? What is his happiness and portion then, that hath this God for his portion!

A few suitable particular Exhortations. 1. Ex-

1. Exhortation. As you have choſen God, ſo cleave to the God you have thus choſen, hug him, and embrace him, and let him not go again away from you: Do not caſt him off, I pray you; remember that paſſage, Mal. 2. 16. *The Lord, the God of Jacob ſaith, that he hateth putting away.* The paſſage is uttered, in reference to married perſons ſtedfaſtneſs one to another; and if ſo be, that God hateth putting away in reference to theſe Corporal, and Carnal marriages, between a Man and his Wife, Doth he not much more in this Spiritual marriage, between the Soul and himſelf? If God be once married to us, and we are betrothed unto him, he is as much againſt putting away on either ſide, as he is againſt the Husbands, or Wives putting away each other; Doth He ſo to us? *Iſa.* 41. 9. there is a notable paſſage, *I have choſen thee, and not caſt thee away.* God doth not chuſe us, and then caſt us away, why then ſhould we deal thus with God? be perſwaded to cleave to him, and

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not cast him away, stick to God as *David* resolved to do, *Ps.* 16. before. When *Barnabas* came, and saw the Grace of God in some whom he visited, *Acts* 11. 23. It's said, he *exhorted them, that with full purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.* It's God's Command, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and cleave unto him,* &c. Deut. 10. 20. And this is made the condition of God's driving out the *Canaanites* before them, *Chap.* 11. 22. The like Exhortation joyn'd with a Commendation is given, Josh. 23. 8. *But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.* And this in the text, is put in opposition to denying God, *ver.* 27. where we read that *Joshua* put up a stone, in this place in the presence of all the people, to be as a witness, between the Lord and them of this transaction; that stone should be a witness, of what they had done, in making such a willing choice of God to themselves; lest upon the occasion of any temptation, they should deny and renounce

nounce him. Be intreated, whoever hath heard or doth read this to cleave to God, and not deny him, nor put him away: when you have choſen him, do not change him, as the heathens will not, though God's people are apt ſo to do, Jer. 2. 10. *Hath a nation* (that is Heathen and Idolatrous) *changed their gods which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their Glory, for that which profiteth not*; Oh do not ſo, eſpecially ſith God doth not deal ſo with us, and he indeed hath cauſe and provocation ſo to do, yet we have none at all: this God hinteth to them, and upbraideth them with, ver. 5 before. *Thus ſaith the Lord, what iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me*, &c. ver. 6. *Neither ſay they in their heart, where is the Lord, that brought us up out of the Land of Egypt?* &c. The Lord taxeth them, *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me?* &c. but what iniquity may not God charge us with, as a juſt cauſe of caſting us off, and putting us away for-

for ever! and whosoever will may see it charged home on *Jerusalem*, *Ezek.* 16. 19, 20, 23, &c. if others lie at us for embracements; let us cast them away, but let us not deal so with God, who is faithful to us, notwithstanding our demerits from him.

2. Exhortation. Content your selves with him alone, whom you have chosen. So did the Prophet *David* and rejoice in his portion, Psal. 16. 5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance*, &c. ver. 6. shews his satisfaction with this, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea I have a Godly heritage*; as if he had said, I am in a very good estate, * having God to be my portion, I am in a Condition that doth wonderfully Content me, let others chuse riches, honours, &c. Be satisfied therewith, look after none other but himself; be taken up with him: Yea, there is reason to be Contented with God only, because God

* *Significat se diligere Deum super omnia, & ipso contentum esse.* Calvin.

Cum Deum habeame & hariditate, optima amana pars agri mihi obtigit. M. P. syn.

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is All, and hath All. Therefore continue for ever with him.

3. Exhortation. Having choſen God, never repent of your choice. You may repent of chuſing the World, becauſe that may be hurtful unto you: but we can never have cauſe, juſtly to repent of chuſing God to be ours: are not the things of the World compared, and that juſtly to Briars and Thorns? and hath not a Thorn coſt and loſt many a man a Limb, yea his very life? how many have ventured their Souls for the World! though our Saviour ſaith, *What will it profit a man to gain the whole World, and loſe his Soul? or what ſhall a man give in Exchange for his Soul?* alwaies there is danger in chuſing other things, but never any danger in chuſing God to be ours. It brings deſolating judgments on any people, *They choſe new Gods, and there was War in their Gates*, Judg. 5. 8.

4. Exhortation. Be perſwaded, to joy in him above all, reſt in your love to him as he in his love to you,

you, Zeph. 3. 17. *He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing:* Have we not much more cause to rejoice in him than he in us? he fills our desire with goodness, we never fulfil his desire, but grieve and provoke him; say and do as *Mary*, Luk. 1. 46, 47. *My Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

CHAP. X.

Closeth up all, shewing the intendment of the whole.

AND now in the close of all I beseech and perswade you, to chuse and close with God by heartily accepting, and embracing of the terms of his Covenant of Grace. God's Covenant runs in the form of an offer on his part, and of a gracious acceptance, and charge mixed together as to our part, *I will be your God*; as who should say, chuse

chuſe me and I am yours (as before Mot. 1.) *and ye ſhall be my people.* I will take you, accept you as mine, and ye ſhall become my holy, obedient people, and I could heartily wiſh, that I might prevail with you all, for a particular expreſs entring into Covenant with God. To chuſe and take God to your ſelves according to the aforeſaid offer, and ſo ſolemnly give and yield up your ſelves to God, to become his people as he requires. That there might be a deliberate and open tranſaction between God and your Souls, and that you would have a draught by you as a teſtimony thereof, containing the Sum of the whole, ſubſcribed with the hand, and ſealed with your ſeal, as we read of ſome that did. *Neh.* 9. 38. whether that was done by every particular of that great multitude, as by reaſon of the * *Hebraiſm* ſome conceive, that the Princes, Levits, and Prieſts, were to ſee the Covenant ſealed by all, or whether they as the Heads and Repreſentatives of the

* זעל החתום *at or over the ſealing* Annotat.

the rest did it, is not now needful to Question; but if the former was done as it may be rationally supposed, then it speaks fully to our purpose, it may be not only subscribed with the hand, but sealed also. This would be as effectual a Monitor of, and Bond upon us, as *Joshua's* stone that he set up for a testimony, *ver.* 27. This way is the Counsel of a Reverend Divine, in a book written by him, called a *Vindication of Godliness* (which it may be some of you that hear and read this, and I hope thousands more have seen) wherein *pag.* 173. &c. he hath given suitable direction, very quick and pressing to such a way of dealing with God; and *pag.* 179. he hath set down the form of such a Covenant. Such a thing is directed to also, * in another Reverend Divine's book, named in the margin, and another you may find subjoyned at the end hereof; you may make use of which you please: But I think it

* *Mr. Thomas Vincent*, Treat. *called Words whereby we may be saved.* pag. 63. 64. &c. Also in *Mr. Jos. Alleins* book of Convers. pag. 164. the same as is in *Vindicia Pietatis.*

it beſt, for every judicious Chriſtian to have a draught of his own, as beſt ſuiting his eſtate; which will much tend to our Spiritual good and advantage, as the Appendix will diſcover; and then in life manifeſt, that you have choſen him, by chuſing all thoſe things that pleaſe him. God complains of it as a great ſin of the Jews, *that they did evil before him*, and wherein was that ſo evident? *and did chuſe that wherein I delighted not*, Iſa. 65. 12. juſt as if a woman ſhould chuſe a man for her husband, but not do any thing he delights in, rather chuſe to do all that might diſpleaſe him. Whereas thoſe that do take hold of God's Covenant, muſt chuſe alſo thoſe things that pleaſe God, *Iſa.* 56. 4. It may be ſhe will live with him, for a ſhew and a pretence, but is ſo far from pleaſing him, as that ſhe is always vexing, and fretting him; juſt ſo *Jeruſalem* fretted God in all theſe things, Ezek. 16. 43. *Though we ſhould walk ſo as to pleaſe God, and abound therein more and more.* 1 Theſ. 4. 1. The carriages and

and converſations of moſt towards God, do diſcover, that they chuſe the things that do diſpleaſe him, but let us do and chuſe to do the things that pleaſe him. Particularly. 1. chuſe the fear of the Lord, *Be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Prov. 23. that is a brave life, and that will make a man eſchew whatſoever is diſpleaſing unto God. God laies it on a people as their great ſin, that they *did not chuſe the fear of the Lord*, Prov. 1. 31.

2. Chuſe the ſtatutes of God; *David* that choſe God for his portion and inheritance, he alſo choſe Gods ſtatutes. Pſal. 119. 111. *Thy teſtimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart*; and ver. 30. *I have choſen the way of thy truth.* Men look upon the actions, but God looks on the choice of perſons more than their actions, (though he look to and obſerves both): ſome ſin out of infirmity, others out of choice chuſe the things wherein God hath no pleaſure. *Folly is joy to him that is deſtitute of Wiſdom.*

Prov.

Prov. 15. 21. now God pities the one, and pardons; *But if we ſin wilfully, after we have received the knowledg of the truth, this is ſad indeed!* Heb. 10. I beſeech you therefore, chuſe God, and cleave to him, with all your Heart and Soul for ever. And frequently reiterate and ſolemnly view this way of tranſacting with God; according to the draught you have lying by you, eſpecially every faſt-day, & every Sacrament-day, wherein there is (as I may ſo ſay) a new Seal ſet to the bond of the Covenant, wherein you are obliged: Oh that the tranſaction between God and Iſrael, might be between every Soul, that hath heard and may read this. Deut. 26. 17. *Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his waies, and to hearken to his voice.* ver. 18. *and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promiſed,* and that thou ſhouldeſt keep all his Commandements.

See the Appendix.

Having

Having directed you to two forms of the Covenant, whereby the Christians choice of God is compleated, by a free and blessed close with him; as also made mention of another to be subjoyned: I thought good to offer you the use and view thereof, though I have wished, and still do, that each person that can, would be his own penman in this case; because though it may be drawn full enough to any hand, yet it may not so suit and satisfy every ones Condition, or Experience, as it might if it were drawn out of, (as I may say) and accord-

according to the frame and workings of a Man's own Soul.

O Most Glorious, Gracious and blessed Lord God, the great Creator, and most high possessor of Heaven and Earth; I thy poor and unworthy Creature, * fearfully and wonderfully made by thee at first in my Creation, and as wonderfully dignified by thee, in being taken into Covenant with thee, in that blessed estate wherein I was at first made; do desire to come humbly prostrate before thee in the sense of thy great mercy, and my own vileness and undone estate by the fall; and the irreparable breach of that first Covenant, by that transgression of my first parents, and manifold violations of all thy holy and just, and good Laws, in my sinful practice and Conversation, being touched by thy blessed Spirit with a serious remorse, therefor, im emboldned by thy gracious invitations, and frequent call, to

Gen. 14. 19. * *Psal.* 139. 14. *Rom.* 7. 12.

to come, in the most humble and unfeigned manner that I can unto thee: beseeching thee that thou wouldest accept of me in thy dear Son, and mercifully vouchsafe to receive me into Covenant a-new with thy self, even that Covenant of Grace, which thou hast revealed in thy holy Word; wherein thou offerest & assurest, to all that will come unto thee, and lay hold on thy mercy, * that *they shall in no wise be cast out*; I am, I acknowledg a lost sinner in my self; and have daily played my part against thee, in thought, and word, and deed; discovering that enmity, that my heart hath been by nature full of against thee, in my enormous rebellions, and provocations. Thy Promise is, * Though I have been wicked, If I forsake my evil way, and though I have been unrighteous, if I forsake my evil thoughts, and turn unto the Lord, thou wilt have mercy upon me, and abundantly pardon. Having encouragement by thy promise, and hoping in thy word, * behold I come

* *Joh.* 6. 37.

**Isa.* 55. 7.

* Jer. 3. 22.

that

unto thee, beseeching thee O Lord, that thou wouldest have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner. *Luk.* 18. 13.

Now sith it hath pleased thee to require, and dost expect of him that expecteth to be received of thee, that he should not * touch the unclean thing, I do here in thy presence, abhorring my self for all my past vileness, sinfulness, and unprofitableness; resolve, Covenant and promise in thy name, and by thy strength to forsake the Devil, World, and Flesh, and do renounce all the hidden works of darkness, and dishonesty: and before the Lord * say to every Idol (in heart and Life) get thee hence; purposing in my heart, never to * yield my body, or Soul, nor the members, and faculties of them, as the members of unrighteousness to sin, nor suffer for time to come, as heretofore, through thine assisting grace, *sin to reign in my mortal body, nor immortal Soul, that I should obey it in the lusts thereof; that I will keep constant, strict watch against all the advantages, snares,

* 2 *Cor.* 6, 17.

2 *Cor.* 4. 1.

* *Isa.* 30. 22.

* *Rom.* 6. 13.

* *v.* 12.

and temptations of all mine, and and thine Enemies; earnestly in-
* 2. *Cor.* 12. 9. treating, and imploring thine * Allsufficient Grace to make
† 1 *Pet.* 5. 8, 9. me † Sober and Vigilant, that my adversary the Devil, though he goes about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour, may not by
* 2 *Cor.* 2. 11. any of * his devices, take any advantage against me, but that I may resist him stedfastly in the faith, thy grace assisting thereto; keeping my Heart, Tongue and way, from that which is displeasing unto thee. And sith I know and am convinced † that
† *Isa.* 64. 6. my righteousnes is as filthy rags and no possibility of Salvation by it, I do renounce it, and loath my self for the imperfections of it; being a lost, perishing and damnable wretch, without thy pardoning and saving Grace!

* *Tit.* 3. 4. And * because the kindnes and love of God towards man, hath so exceedingly appeared, as that thou hast freely offered, and promised,
† *Jer.* 32. 40. to make an † Everlasting Covenant, that thou wilt never turn away from them, to do them good, but

wilt

wilt ever be their God, that do * lay hold on thy Covenant, I deſire heartily to take thee O God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt to be my God; to be my Father, Saviour, and Comforter, to be my portion, and happineſs here, and hereafter; beſeeching thee, that thou wouldeſt † keep this purpoſe in my heart, and continue to communicate this power to my Soul, that I may ever cleave to the my Lord and God, that I may become wholly, and only thine for ever and ever ſticking unto thy teſtimonies, & chuſing the way of thy Commandements all my daies; for now the * vows of God are upon me, yea I have † ſworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.

* *Iſa.* 56. 6.

† 1 *Cron.* 29. 18.

* *Pſal.* 56. 12.

† *Pſal.* 119. 106.

And forasmuch as there is no Coming to the Father but by Chriſt, who is the * way, truth, and life, who is freely offered in the Goſpel, † in whom alone thou art well pleaſed, and I can only be accepted; I heartily and thankfully deſire * to receive Jeſus Chriſt,

* *Joh.* 14. 6.

† *Mat.* 3. 17.

* *Col.* 2. 6.

and to walk in him; To take him
† 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. to be my † Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, to espouse my Soul to him this day,
* *Isa.* 56. 6. and * joyn my self to him in a Covenant, that can never be broken off or forgotten.

My dear Saviour, who hast made
† *Heb.* 10. 19. † a new and living way to the Father, for me, I do here solemnly
* *Psal.* 24. 7, 9. and freely * open the everlasting doors of my heart to thee, that thou the King of glory mayst come in,
† *Eph.* 3. 17. that so thou mayst † dwell in my heart by faith, that being lost without thee, yet
* *Phil.* 3. 9. * found in thee, I may be saved; thine I desire to be, though I deserve no such privilege at all, being a filthy stinking sinner,
† *Eph.* 2. 1. † dead in trespasses and Sins;
* 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. * Laden with hellish lusts, pressed down even to Hell it self: but it hath pleased thee to † espouse me
† *Hos.* 2. 18. to thy self, in Righteousness, and Mercy, and Faithfulness; I do with my whole Soul embrace and lay hold on thee, and do take thee the
* *Rev.* 15. 4. * King of Saints, to be my only Lord, and Head and Husband, my only

only King and Commander, and willingly † taking thy easy yoke upon me, I present my self unto thee resolving to * continue not only many but all my daies with thee, † yielding up my self, body and Soul, as an holy, living, acceptable sacrifice to thee, who hast offered up thy self as a * Sacrifice to the Father, for my poor lost Soul, engaging through thy Grace, that I will stoop to thy Scepter, fulfil thy will, and † follow thee the Lamb of God whithersoever thou goest, to be disposed of by thee in every condition, that neither poverty, nor riches; nor * life, nor death, shall separate between me and thee.

† *Mat.* 11. 29.
* *Hos.* 3. 3.
† *Rom.* 12. 1.
* *Eph.* 5. 2.
† *Rev.* 14. 4.
* *Rom.* 8. 38, 39.

Moreover, sith this † access is by one Spirit unto the Father through Christ, I do here most blessed Spirit, take thee to be my only God also: to be my Guide, and * Comforter, beseeching thee that thou wouldest * Seal me up unto the day of redemption. That thou wouldest be in me a † Fountain of living Water, springing up to life e-

† *Eph.* 3. 12.
* *Joh.* 18. 9.
* *Eph.* 4. 30.
† *Joh.* 7. 38.

ternal. That so I may notwithstanding all difficulties, * hold on my way and grow stronger and stronger, vowing to be † led by no other Spirit, but thy self, *walking after the Spirit, for time to come, and not after the flesh.

*Job 17. 9.
† Gal. 5. 18.
* Rom. 8. 1.

Also, because thou requirest every one that expecteth to † enter by the Gate into the City, to keep thy Commandments: and having now entred into (and renewed) the bond of the Covenant so to do, as one of thy people, to which end thou hast graciously promised, that thou wilt * put thy fear into my heart that I shall not depart from thee; I here as thy Covenant-servant, engage solemnly to become wholly thine: that I will be for no other; † O Lord truely I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant, * devoted to thy Fear, Love, and Service: Praying that thou wouldest keep thy promise, to enable me to walk in thy statutes, and through the never-failing influence of thy Heavenly power, * I will keep thy statutes, † my hands also will I

† Rev. 22. 14.
*Jer. 32. 40.
† Psal. 116. 15.
* Psal. 119. 38.
* Psal. 119. 8.
† v. 48.

lift

list up to thy Commandements which I love: Oh forsake me not utterly, yea I will * follow no counsel but of thy Spirit, and Word from henceforth all the days of my life. Though Satan tempt, the World allures, and the † Flesh lusteth against the Spirit; yet being * strengthned with might by thy Spirit in the inner man, will † wrestle against Sin, Satan, and the World, yea all manner of wickedness whatsoever, * fighting the good fight of Faith, till I lay hold on the possession of eternal life, † having finished my course, and obtain'd the Crown of righteousness, which thou hast promised.

* *Isa.* 30. 1.
† *Gal.* 5. 17.
* *Eph.* 3. 16.
† *Eph.* 6. 12.
* 1 *Tim.* 6. 12.
† 2 *Tim.* 4. 8.

Yet sith there is no man, * that liveth and sinneth not, I do in thy holy presence protest against any contrived, allowed sin, whereby I shall † wickedly depart from my God, and that though of force I do, and shall in part while I am in this body, * with my flesh serve the law of sin, yet with my mind will I serve the law of God wholly, and for ever.

* *Eccles.* 7. 20.
† *Psal.* 18. 21.
* *Rom.* 7. 25.

† *Josh.* 22.22. * *Jer.* 17.10. † *Psal.* 139.23, 24. * *Psal.* 119.4. † *Psal.* 27.8. * 119.5. † *Deut.* 26.16. **Phil.* 4.4. †2 *Chron.* 15.15. * *Ps.* 73.25. † *Song.* 6.3. * *Psal* 16.6. † *Eph.* 1.4, 5. * *Rev.* 5.9, 10.

Now the † Lord God of Gods, the * searcher of the hearts, and tryer of the reins, † search me, and try me, and if their be any way of wickedness in me, lead me in the way everlasting: sith thou * commandest me to keep thy precepts diligently, † my heart saith unto thee, * Oh that my waies were directed, to keep thy statutes; therefore will I † keep, and do them with all mine heart, and all my Soul.

Blessed God, I desire to * rejoice in thee, and in the † Oath and Covenant made with thee, this I do in the truth, and uprightness of my heart, as I have chosen so I desire to prize thee above all; * Whom have I in Heaven but thee! and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee: † I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. * The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage. † Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath chosen me in him, before the Foundation of the World.

* Blessing, Honour, and Glory be given

given to the Lamb for ever, who was slain, and hast redeemed me to God, by thy blood, † the blood of the Covenant. Blessed be the eternal Spirit who hast * moved my heart to enter, into this solemn relation, and obligation unto God.

† *Zech.* 9.11.

* *Gen.* 2.

† The Lord my God, the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant, and Mercy to them that Love him, and keep his Commandments: keep to me the Covenant, and the Mercy, and Confirm it to the end, and strengthen me so with thy Grace that I may keep the words of this Covenant, and do them; and this Covenant made this day with my God, let not any thing, Sin, Satan, World, Life nor Death, disannul; but let it be confirmed to all Eternity. *Amen. Amen.*

† *Deut.* 7. 9. & 29. 9.

FINIS.

AN

APPENDIX

Containing

PROPOSITIONS

Evidencing,

Not only the warrantableneſs, but expediency, of tranſacting with God in a particular expreſs

Covenant-way.

Written at firſt, for the ſatisfaction of a private friend; now publiſhed at the requeſt of ſome others, and for the benefit, and advnatage of any that ſhall peruſe them.

By *SAMUEL VVINNEY*, ſometimes Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Glaſton* in Somerſetſhire.

London, Printed for *Thomas Cockeril* at the *Atlas* in *Cornhil*, near the Royal Exchange, 1675.

To the Reader.

Courteous Reader.

THere being lately extant a worthy Treatiſe of a Reverend Divine, called Vindiciæ Pietatis, written by Mr. R. A. preſſing to a ſtrict and preciſe Converſation, and in it giving advice to perſons not yet in Covenant, to come in and compleat all by Solemn Covenanting with God, I moſt gladly, ſweetly and delightfully viewed the deſign, and meeting with the doubts of ſome perſon (a pretious Servant of God, and my dear and intimate friend) about the warrantableneſs of that way, becauſe I my ſelf was ſo much affected with the thing, did

did set my self (upon his request and letter to me) seriously to seek what warrant Gods word afforded to it, and at some spare-hours, in some few days of vacation *from my incumbring and tedious imployment, drew up the following* Propositions *tending to the evidence thereof; hoping that either the author of the forenamed treatise or some person else, whose* Graces, Abilities *and* Leisure *are greater than mine, may be stirred up more fully to clear it. The Lord grant, that whosoever may peruse them may have the same comfort and benefit thereby, as the Author that composed them, and now through the importunity of others made them publick.* Amen.

Certain

Certain PROPOSITIONS *tending to the clearing of a Queſtion, and Satisfaction of ſome doubts, about particular expreſs entring into Covenant with God.*

Prop. I.

THat God hath of his own good pleaſure, from all eternity, elected ſome to everlaſting life: 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. *Elect according to the foreknowledg of God.* Eph. 1. 4. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the Foundation of the World.*

Prop. II.

That God did from all eternity tranſact the buſineſs of the Salvation of theſe elected perſons, be-

tween

tween himſelf and his Son Jeſus Chriſt. God gave every one of thoſe whom he would have mercy on, to Jeſus Chriſt, to the intent that he might deliver them all, and every one of them, out of the eſtate of ſin and miſery, which they ſhould implunge themſelves into by the fall of *Adam*, and the Son he accepts of this work of Salvation and Redemption of them by his own death, to be accompliſhed in the fulneſs of time, and this by Divines is called the *Covenant of Redemption*.

Prop. III.

That (beſides the Covenant tranſacted between the Father and the Son, about the Redemption and Salvation of the elect from all eternity) God he enters into a Covenant of Grace, with the perſons themſelves, that are elected, in due time, which yet is a conſequent of the former; For if Chriſt had never undertaken, or accepted of the terms in that Covenant of Redemption

demption, before time, there had been no Covenant of Grace in time, with the Elect themſelves.

Prop. IV.

This Covenant between God and his people is mutual, and ſtipulatory, (that is) obligeth God, (to ſpeak with due reverence of ſo great a Majeſty,) and alſo obligeth all, and every the perſons of his people, taken into it, wherein, as God graciouſly doth promiſe to be their God, to be good and kind unto them, yea to be all to them, and do all for them, which ſhall be for preſent, and future, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal good: ſo are they anſwerably bound, to become his people, for their part, and ſo to live before God, as his people, in Faith, Repentance, Holineſs and Obedience, all their daies. So that the preceptive part, as well as the promiſſive part of the Covenant, is expreſly in Scripture called, and entitled by the name of a Covenant, be-

becauſe of that tye on perſons, to perform the duty, as God hath graciouſly bound himſelf to perform the mercy; ſo the Moral law is called a Covenant, *Deut.*4.13.2 *Chron.* 6. 11. and the mandatory part in general, *Lev.* 26. 15. *Deut.*29.1. 9. 12, 14, 21, 25. and the Hebrew Phraſe, which properly ſignifies to cut a Covenant, amongſt variety of words by which the LXX. uſe to tranſlate it, one is ἐντελλόμαι, to Command. See *Heb.*9.10. from *Exod.* 24. 8.

Prop. V.

That this Covenant is made with Believers and their Seed, not only with the ſingle perſons of Believers, but with their Seed alſo in them, and themſelves the repreſentatives of their Seed.

Prop. VI.

That every particular perſon of theſe is bound for himſelf, to lay hold on the Covenant: By Faith to apply

apply all the Promiſes; and in Obedience to perform all the precepts, and duties required in this Covenant.

Now about our particular entring into, and being in Covenant with God, divers things are to be weighed, and conſidered, for a right underſtanding thereof.

We may be ſaid, to be in, and to enter into Covenant with God, two waies.

1. Virtually; and this is two waies.

1. Either in our Fathers relation and obligation to God; God enters into Covenant not with Believers perſons only (as before) but with them and their Seed alſo. Gen. 17. 7. *And I will eſtabliſh my Covenant between me, and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlaſting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy Seed after thee.* And every Believer ought to accept the Covenant, not for himſelf only, but for his ſeed. Now my Father's accepting the Covenant, not for himſelf only, but for me, and God's Covenanting

nanting with me as well as with him; doth engage me with him to God in the ſame obligation. This way of Covenant-tranſaction hath been always in all Gods dealings with the Sons of men in this kind, even in both Covenants (*viz.*,) that of Works (called a Covenant of life by our Divines) before the fall, and that of Grace, ever ſince. And this way of being in Covenant with God, may be as ſoon as a man is conceived, and before while he is in his fathers Loins; thus were all the Sons of men (all mankind) in *Adam's* Covenant, and every belivers Seed in their Fathers.

2. Or elſe in our being baptized and receiving thereby the outward ſign, and Seal of the Covenant of Grace. Now though hereby an outward application of the ſign of the Covenant was made to us, yet we did but virtually enter then, and thereby into Covenant with God, because we were altogether paſſive, and not at all active in our participation of that Sacrament.

2. A-

2. Actually, and this is two waies too.

1. Something respects the nature of the thing it self, that there be a serious, cordial, total Resignation of our selves to God, in a holy dependance, reliance, and affiance on all his Promises, accepting him to be our Saviour, the Holy Ghost to be our God, and Jesus Christ to be our Sanctifier, and Comforter, upon his own terms: as he hath offered himself to us, in his blessed Word, with an unfeigned, and universal Obedience to all his Commandments.

2. Something respects the manner of doing of it; and here also something is;

1. Publick, when a person grown to years, and understanding, doth freely, and voluntarily, yea and openly too, in the face and presence of the Congregation, take upon him to fulfil that Covenant, which his Father in his name, and behalf at his Baptism, undertook for him. *Mr. Hamner of Confirmation.*

2. Pri-

* *The nature of this particular expreſs Covenanting with God briefly opened.*

2. Private; and that is when a perſon either at his Converſion, or after doth this upon due, & deliberate Conſideration between God and his own Soul, draw up in writing, a certain form of words, according as his own heart ſhall (upon ſerious ſearch and knowledg of his eſtate according to the Scriptures) direct him. Wherein there ſhall be an humble and hearty accepting, owning, and acknowledging of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, to be his God in Covenant upon his own terms, and that for ever; as alſo a full, and unfeigned Reſignation of himſelf made to God, and Reſolution in the ſtrength of God's grace, to walk with him in an holy Communion, and Converſation, according to the duty required by God from him, in this holy Covenant-ſtate into which he is entred and taken.

Now for our better underſtanding, in a matter of ſo great importance, for further clearing of it, I ſhall

ſhall offer theſe following particulars to ſerious Conſideration.

1. That I make theſe two laſt immediately forenamed, only the Circumſtance of this matter, not at all of the ſubſtance of our entring into Covenant. We may truely be in Covenant, partake of the benefits of it, have an intereſt in God, Jeſus Chriſt, Remiſſion of Sins, and Salvation, yield our ſelves to God, although we do neither of theſe laſt things forementioned: that is to ſay, though we are never brought into the Congregation, there openly to profeſs our taking theſe obligations upon our ſelves, which our Father did for us at our Baptiſm, or never have ſuch a draught in expreſs writing, between God and our ſelves.

2. The Scripture ſaith, *One ſhall ſay I am the Lord's*, as well as, *another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord, and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of Jacob.* Iſa. 44. 5. Now if this particular ſhould be a neceſſary Duty, (*viz*) ſubſcribing with the hand, and the

the other too: then ſome would be bound to one mode or form of tranſacting with God and others to another, whereas the Scripture maketh one as lawful, good, and valid as another; yea the Scripture ſeems to ſpeak more in that expreſſion of ſaying, than that of ſubſcribing with the hand, as is eaſily obſervable: there being two expreſſions of the former, one only of the latter. So that text, Deut. 26. 17, 18. *Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his waies, &c.* or as the *Hebrew* hath it, thou haſt made to ſay, that is, to promiſe, as worthy *Ainſworth* on the place; though others, thou haſt exalted the Lord to be thy God: and ſurely they that take God to be their God, as they ſhould exalt him above all in their eſtimation, as the Prophet did, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Pſal. 73. 25. ſo ſhould they make him their Lord Paramount, make him their Sovereign, and Supream, ſhould not ſet up, or ſuffer any thing higher than he, the * *Greek, thou haſt choſen the Lord this*

את יהוה האמרת *

* Τὸν Θεὸν εἵλω σήμερον εἶναι σε Θεόν. LXX.

this day to be thy God, but this interpretation though good is a digreſſion; to return therefore.

3. All cannot do this, taking only one expreſſion in the letter, (that is) ſubſcribe with the hand; for very many cannot write, therefore cannot ſubſcribe with the hand to God: And if it ſhould be drawn for them, they may ſet their hands to they know not what, and ſo, if they ſhould ſubſcribe by ſetting their mark, (it's poſſible) they may be deluded therein, they being not capable, (being not able to read write-hand nor themſelves to write) to know what they do.

4. Yet further, I add this to all that hath been ſaid, that it is not only lawful, and warrantable, but alſo very expedient, neceſſary, and advantageous for Chriſtians perſonally, particularly, and expreſly by word, yea and writing, if they can, to tranſact with God in a Covenant-way.

I ſhall ſpeak a little to each of the branches of this Propoſition.

Firſt, That it is lawful, and warrantable theſe things ſeem to evince.

Scripture evidence. It is propheſied, that they ſhall do ſo. *Iſa.* 4 45. *One ſhall ſay I am the Lords: another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand unto the Lord.* Iſa. 45. 24. *Surely, ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs, and ſtrength,* Zech. 13. 9. *They ſhall ſay the Lord is my God.* Hoſ. 2. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me Iſhi, and ſhalt call me no more Baali.*

2. This is practiſed by the Saints of God in former time, the Iſraelites: ſee Deut. 26. 17, 18. *Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his waies,* &c. A notable enumeration of theſe, according to a particular diſtribution of them, into their ſeveral ranks, ages, and ſexes. *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12. Captains, Elders, Officers, Wives, little ones, *that thou ſhouldeſt enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God,* Deut. 5. 27, 28, 29. Three times did the people thus expreſly enter into Covenant with God, *Exod.* 19. 8. and chap. 20. and

and *Exod.* 24. 3. 7. ſo *David* in many and many places. Pſal. 16.2. *O my Soul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord,* &c. Pſal. 42. 9. *I will ſay unto God my rock,* &c. ſo Pſal. 89. 26. *He ſhall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God,* &c. Pſal. 91.2. *I will ſay of the Lord he is my refuge, —— my God,* &c. Pſal. 142. 5. *I cryed unto thee O Lord, I ſaid thou art my refuge* beſides. Pſal. 18. 1, 2. with 144. 2. ſo Pſal. 119. 94. *I am thine ſave me — like that* Iſa. 44. 5. (before) and ver. 106. *I have ſworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. Thomas* did ſo, Joh. 20. 28. *my Lord and my God;* after Jeſus Chriſt had ſaid, *I go to my Father and your Father,* ver. 17. Paul ſaid ſo, Act. 27. 23. *Whoſe I am and whom I ſerve:* The Churches of *Macedonia,* 2 Cor. 8. 5. *Firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord,* &c. And the Apoſtle *Paul* ſaith, that all Chriſtians may do it, and that boldly too. Heb. 13. 6. *ſo that we* (each one in particu-

lar) *may boldly ſay, the Lord is my helper*, &c.

3. Something alſo may be obſerved, much tending to the opening and confirming of this from that Scripture, Pſal. 50. 5. *Gather my Saints together, which have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice.* It's ſpoken of them as though they had a part, and each for himſelf, entred into Covenant with God, who were to be gathered, that is, to be ſummoned to appear before God; which makes nothing for the groundleſs, independent Saint or Church-gathering ſo much ſtickled for; for the Lord doth but here charge, and ſummon the Church of the Jews, collectively called Saints, the whole having a denomination from the better part, to convince them of, and return them from their groſs hypocriſy; that Herald-like expreſſion *pag.* 1. anſwering ſuch obteſtations of *Moſes* as we read of in divers paſſages, Deut. 30. 19. *I call Heaven and Earth to witneſs*, and 32. 1. *give Ear Oh Heavens*, &c. with *Iſa.* 1. 2. but this

Cain. in loc.

this is to our purpoſe that the Scripture doth imply, that they had diſtinctly, and apart entred into Covenant with God, each for himſelf by Sacrifice. Of this Covenanting between God and his people by Sacrifice, we may ſee a lively deſcription, Exod. 24. 4. 8. *And Moſes wrote all the words of the Lord, and roſe up early in the morning, and builded an Altar, under the hill, and 12 pillars according to the 12 tribes of Iſrael.* 5. *And he ſent young men of the Children of Iſrael, which offered burnt-offerings, and ~~ſacrificed~~ ſacrificed peace-offerings, of Oxen unto the Lord* —— 7. *And he took the book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people, and they ſaid, all that the Lord hath ſaid, will we do and be obedient.* 8. And *Moſes took the blood, and ſprinkled on the people, and ſaid, behold the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you.* Concerning all Theſe words. By theſe two ſorts of Sacrifices the ſanctification of the people was teſtified, who by the death of Chriſt, (whom theſe Sacrifices *Ainſw. in loc.*

fices did figure out) preſented themſelves wholly to God, as obedient Servants (according to that of the Apoſtle, Heb. 9. 14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your Conſcience from dead works, to ſerve the living God*;) and it is to be obſerved, about both of them, how particularly, and perſonally they did tranſact with God. 1. Of the burnt-offering Lev. 1. 2. *If any man bring an offering to the Lord.* ver. 3. *If his offering be a burnt-ſacrifice of the herd, let him offer a* Male without blemiſh, — ver. 4, and he *ſhall put his hand, upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it ſhall be accepted for him to make an atonement for him.* 2. The like is ſaid of the peace-offering. *Lev.* 3. 1, 2, and *ver.* 6, 7, 8. Now this particular laying on the hand by every perſon that brought a Sacrifice to the Prieſt to be offered to God, what doth it teach us? Amongſt many things I ſhall not mention, all which might be expreſſed,

ſed, theſe two principally to our purpoſe; 1. That every one was bound to apply Chriſt, particularly to himſelf by ~~the hand~~ of his own Faith. 2. That he was to make an holy reſignation of himſelf to God and *Chriſt, that men bringing ſacrifices to God ſhould rather ſacrifice themſelves — than that beaſt*; agreeing with the Exhortation of the Apoſtle Paul, Rom. 12. 1. *I beſeech you therefore Brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living holy acceptable Sacrifice unto God, which is your reaſonable Service.* For many are Content to give their goods to God, but themſelves to the Devil, which God abhorreth; ſaid that holy Biſhop. How plainly doth it hence appear, that this Covenanting with God by Sacrifice, proves the truth treated of, in that Sacrifice, each perſon laying his hand on his Sacrifice, implying his particular dependence upon, and applying Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, for Salvation; and giving up himſelf to God and Chriſt, in an holy and

Bp. Babington's Comfort. Notes on Lev. 1. 4.

ubi ſup.

ibid.

Univerſal Obedience. Something more of this anon.

2 *Scrip. Arguments.* Some Arguments drawn from Scripture for the proof of its lawfulneſs which I ſhall propoſe not in way of Syllogiſm formally, but of ordinary reaſon, for the capacity of any that may deſire Satisfaction.

1. It is lawful and warrantable to tranſact with God, in a particular, and perſonal way, becauſe every perſon is bound, by a particular Faith to apply the Promiſes to himſelf in particular, that are propoſed in general to all: yea ſome Promiſes, that are made to ſome particular perſons in reference to ſome particular matters, are yet by the Holy Ghoſt extended to all, and offered to and to be applyed by every Chriſtian: thus *Joſhua* was not to carry away, and impropriate to himſelf all the benefit of the Promiſe made to him, about Gods being with him, and not failing, nor forſaking him, *Joſh.* 1. 5. Compared with *Heb.* 13. 5. where the Apoſtle extends it to all, and yet ſeems thereby to apply it to every particular Chriſtian: *I will*

will never leave thee, nor forſake thee. Ther's the particular application of that Promiſe made at firſt to *Joſhua* to every particular Chriſtians exigence, ver. 6. *Wherefore we may boldly ſay.* (viz. All Collectively, and each one ſinglely in his own behalf, and for his own eſpecial behoof) *the Lord is my helper, &c.* And if ſo, why ſhould not (ſith the Covenant is mutually and reciprocally obligatory) there be a particular reſignation, made by every Chriſtian of himſelf to God?

2. If I am bound in particular by every Command, then I ought and may lawfully give my aſſent thereto, in word or writing, either or both. That command reacheth every particular Chriſtian. *Rom.* 6. 13. yield your ſelves unto God.

3. Where there was a general, vocal aſſenting ſtipulation made to God, and at any time an anſwer made to his call, there were alſo the particulars implyed, or expreſt, or both. So before, *Exod.* 19. 20. and 24. *Chap.* It is ſaid all the people anſwered together, and all the people

anſwered with one voice: So *Deut.* 5. 27, 28. It is not ſaid, their Heads only, or Officers, or Elders, but all the people with an expreſs mention of their voices. Yea further we ſhall ſee the people expreſly mentioned, and diſtinctly from all theſe, *Joſh.* 24. 1, 2. with 16. 17. &c.

4. Becauſe the benefits of the blood of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (which is called *the Blood of the Covenant*, Zech. 9. 11.) which are alſo the benefits of the Covenant of grace, (for both are one) are applyed in particular by Gods Saints, in Scripture: ſee Gal. 2. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* The like the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Rom. 8. 2. *for the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death.*

5. *David's* Prayer may give a little light to this truth, which he makes, and we may read recor-

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ded, *Psal. 35. 3. Say unto my Soul I am thy Salvation. Wherein David* desires God to say to him, in this kind in particular: then certainly it may not be unwarrantable, for Gods people to deal with God in reference to their particular Interest in God, and consequently in the Covenant.

6. It's Considerable, how much Gods transaction with the Sons of men in this kind, and way is spoken of and uttered, in the terms, and under the notion of single and particular persons. (1.) They were particularly numbred out to Jesus Christ, and accordingly returned by tale (as I may say) to the Father by the Son. John. 17. 12, *Those thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of perdition. &c.* (2) *One shall say, and another shall subscribe,* not some, and others, in the plural number but one and another in the singular number. (3.) In the precepts of the moral law at mount Sinai, (which all sound Divines hold, & acknowledg to be a Covenant of grace,)

grace,) with *Iſrael*, *Exod.* 20. the Lord ſpeaks particularly, thou ſhalt and thou ſhalt not, not ye but thou. (4.) The Covenant with Chriſt (Myſtical) mentioned, *Gal.* 3. 16. is expreſſed in Terms of particularity. Now to *Abraham* and his Seed, were the Promiſes made; he ſaith not, and to his Seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Chriſt: now though by Chriſt, here is not meant Chriſt's ſingle perſon, but Chriſt myſtical (a collective term; As 1 Cor. 12. 12. *So alſo is Chriſt* that is Chriſt's myſtical body, of which he is the Head) yet this may ſhew and point out to us, by Analogy and proportion, that every believer hath intereſt in, and ſhould accordingly make particular application, of the whole of the Covenant unto themſelves.

7. Becauſe the Holy Ghoſt warranteth this in his own expreſſion. See 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now ye are the body of Chriſt, and members in particular.* Our tranſacting with God this way is to that end and purpoſe, that we may make ſure of an intereſt

reſt in him, and our union, and relation to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to our ſelves in particular: If the Holy Ghoſt is ſo particular in this kind, ſurely, we may not onely be ſo, but much more ought to be ſo.

8. If the Devil, in the Covenants he makes with perſons, doth make every particular perſon, ſubſcribe with his hand, yea and ſome (I have heard, or read, or both) with their own blood, their reſignation of themſelves to him, in that helliſh bond they are tyed to him in: may we not then, yea how much more, are we bound to deal particularly with God, to make him ſure to us and our ſelves ſure to him?

9. The expreſſions and reſemblances by which this Covenanting with God is ſet forth, do imply and import as much as this is (1.) It is reſembled to a marriage-Covenant, Hoſ. 2. 16. *thou ſhalt call me Iſhi*, that is, my husband; and ver. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs*, &c. ver. 20. *I will*

will betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs, &c. Now God is our husband, Iſa. 54. 5. *thy maker is thy huſband, &c.* And doth the husband in the marriage Covenant, (for that is called a Covenant alſo) the wife married is called *the wife of thy Covenant*, (viz.) by marriage, *Mal.* 2. 14. the marriage-knot and obligation is called *the Covenant of God*, Prov. 2. 17.) only promiſe to be a loving, faithful husband, and no more? Surely this is but half-marriage, the promiſe of the one party; or rather doth not the wife alſo engage by word of mouth, that ſhe will be a loving, faithful, and obedient wife? and then the marriage is full and compleat: In like manner as God, the huſband of his people promiſeth to be their God; ſo the eſpouſed Soul promiſeth to be only for God, and Jeſus Chriſt and for none elſe, and this ought every particular Soul to do which is the ſpouſe of the Lord Jeſus. *I have betrothed you unto one husband*, ſaith the Apoſtle Paul, *the Soul's* * 2 Cor. 11. Now Converſion is *Eſpouſal*,

* *Converſion*

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a work wrought upon every particular Soul, and that Soul and as many Soul's as are converted, do in particular turn to God, every one for himself, & resolves to be for him only, and none else. (2.) Another expression of this is by the giving of the hand, *Rom.* 6. 13. compared with 2 Chron. 30. 8. *Now be not stiffnecked as your Fathers were, but yield your selves to the Lord*; * Hebrew; Give the hand to the Lord, as the Margin of some Bibles hath it, which hath some resemblance to marriage also forenamed; wherein as there is an express Promise by word of mouth, so there is at the same time a solemn and publick Giving of the hand each to other. And this action hath many times the virtue of a ratification of Promises, in our civil Commerce and mutual contracts one with another. The Greek; Give glory to God; like that Jer. 13. 16. *give Glory to God* by repentance and humiliation, pressing to the same duty laid down in the first words, positively, though there negatively; be not stiffnecked

* תנו-יד ליהוה

Δότε δόξαν. LXX.

necked in both places, *yield your ſelves to the Lord* in our tranſlation. (3.) Another expreſſion we ſhall find, Pſal. 50. 5. *Gather my Saints which have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice*; Hebrew; Cut a Covenant, for at holy Covenants, the Sacrifices were cut aſunder, and both the perſons went between the parts, to ſhew that there was a mutual ſtipulation and engagement, not one perſon only was tyed, but both did thus reciprocally tranſact one with another, and were interchangeably obliged to and aſſured of the terms therein contained.

כרתי בריתי

Ainſw.

10. Further, this is no more than is already done virtually by us in our Baptiſm-Covenant, and there's no perſon of ſound judgment but thinketh himſelf to be really and fully bound thereby, and wo be to every baptized perſon, that lives and dies in the neglect of fulfilling that Covenant. And this kind of expreſs tranſacting between God, and our ſelves by ſpeech or writing is but a doing of the ſame thing in another

ther way. So alſo in the Sacrament of the Supper wherein every perſon takes both the Elements, the Bread and the Cup into his own hand, denoting his receiving Chriſt to himſelf in particular, and giving up himſelf to him, both receiving, and reſigning himſelf up back again is implyed thereby.

11. Laſtly, doth not every Chriſtian do the ſame thing, when he comes to die? It is the laſt work that all men that die in Chriſt, and in the faith do, *viz.* reſign themſelves up particularly, Body and Soul into the hands of God; and as the Apoſtle phraſeth it, *Commit their Souls unto him after all their well-doing as into the hands of a faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. 4. ult. How comfortably, freely, & confidently will they do it then, having done it ſolemnly before hand in their life-time? for this we have our bleſſed Saviour for a patern: See Luk. 23. 46. *Cryed with a loud voice and ſaid, Father into thy hands I Commend my Spirit, and gave up the Ghoſt*; the very ſame words that *David* the type of Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt did uſe when he was alive (in his life-time) Pſal. 31. 5. *Into thy hands I Commend my Spirit, thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!* in the doing of this work, when he was in great danger of death by the malice, and miſchief his enemies contrived againſt him: the ſame did *Steven* the Protomartyr at his diſſolution and violent death, *Act.* 7. 59. in effect, though not in expreſs words. *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.*

And thus much for the lawfulneſs, and warrantableneſs of it, which is the firſt thing.

Secondly, that it is expedient, neceſſary, and advantageous, appears very plainly by theſe things following.

1. The perſon gets true, and full aſſurance that the work is once done indeed, ſo that the matter will no longer hang in doubt, or if there be any doubts, and objections ariſe at any time, this draught will be a teſtimony of it, which God will never diſown, it being done in ſincerity of heart, or

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if not this way, yet if there hath been a tranſacting by word of mouth, wherein an intereſt in God hath been humbly and heartily accepted and embraced, and ſerious giving up our ſelves to God totally and for ever; I ſay, if it hath been done in this manner the Soul will have ſome ground of evidence, and ſome plea with God, when in the midſt of deſertions and temptations. This puts me in mind of one poor Soul, that was in a mixture of Soul and bodly diſtraction together; who though then as not otherwiſe, in many things and caſes ſenſible, yet being ſet to prayer by ſome perſons that viſited her, whereof ſome were Miniſters, and I my ſelf was one, ſhe made uſe of this paſſage in theſe words or to this effect; Lord, thou knoweſt me poor by name, and thou knoweſt that in ſuch a place (naming it both Houſe and Room) I had Communion with thee, and thou didſt give me aſſurance of intereſt in thee, and being thine. And ſoon after through her bodily diſtraction taken off from

Expreſſing here her name.

from the duty, and diverted: So that this is one beneficial advantage, that comes by it, that the work is ſurely and irrevocably done, and ſo ſhall be able with humble boldneſs to plead with God for our acceptance with him in any Soul-diſtreſſes we are, or may come into; and being once thus in good earneſt done, ſhall never be undone, for that *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, Rom. 11. 33. and though we are a people, that ſhall while we are in the World, through infirmity break Covenant, yet it is God's Covenant-promiſe, *to forgive our iniquities; and remember our ſins no more*, Jer. 31. 34. And it is not every infirmity, that ſhall utterly diſannul this Covenant, and break off this marriage-Covenant, and diſſolve this marriage-knot: ſee *Jer.* 3. throughout; If we heartily, and mournfully return to him, as *ver.* 22, *&c.* For God is a God that keeps Covenant, and mercy to a thouſand Generations, to them that love him and (make it their whole bent and endeavour to)

keep

keep all his Commandments, *Deut.* 7. 9. hence did *David* fetch Comfort in his perſonal, and domeſtical troubles. 2 Sam. 23. 5. *Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an Everlaſting Covenant ordered in all things, and ſure, for this is all my Salvation, and all my deſire; although he make it not to grow.*

2. This will be a moſt ſtrong ty and bond to keep our hearts cloſe unto God in dependence and Obedience. The beſt are uſed to find their hearts hang looſe, and to ſtand at a diſtance through the remainders of unbelief, that makes their hearts depart from the living God, *Heb.* 3. 12. Now what a ſpur and goad will the Conſideration of this be to us, that we are in Covenant, and have ſolemnly lifted up our hands to God, and yielded our ſelves to him? How will this quicken us when we be ſluggiſh, and backward, and our hearts dull, and ſlow in our faith & dependence, & in our holy Converſation and Obedience? if any thing in the World will

will draw on the Soul that is withdrawing, or drawing back, this will do much, to conſider how we have bound our ſelves, and that if we prove not ſtedfaſt in this Covenant, both our tongues and our hands will witneſs againſt us; and that this will be, as it were an hand-writing, (of our own act and deed) another day againſt us.

3. This will be a ſtrong motive to keep the heart off more firmly from, and againſt all ſin; for this is the firſt thing that is done in this ſo ſolemn a work, even to renounce all others that have been as the Lords of, and over the Soul. Say as the Church did Iſa. 26. 13. *O Lord our God, other Lords beſides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee onely, will we make mention of thy name.* The Conſideration of the miſchief of which, was the great motive to draw her to the diſclaiming of them, inſomuch, that theſe two things laid together, will make the perſon that laies them to heart, reſolve, to follow the Apoſtles direction

rection. Rom. 6. 12. *That they will not let ſin reign in their mortal bodies, that they may obey it in the luſts thereof.* Their *Covenant with hell, and death being broken,* and diſſolved, they reſolve through grace, that they will not be *Servants any more to divers luſts and pleaſures,* nor will they be as they have been any more taken captive by Satan at his will. 2 *Tim.* 2. 26.

4. This will be a means to baniſh all hard and evil thoughts of God, and to cheriſh and foſter good thoughts of him. For hereby we ſhall look on God as at peace with us; and our ſelves as friends, and reconciled unto him. So that we ſhall not be filled with jealouſy about his love, nor ſlaviſh fear of his wrath, and indignation; which we were before under in our eſtate of nature being an eſtate of wrath, for we were *by nature children of wrath as well as others,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 2. 3. So that now the ſtrife is at an end, and the Controverſy is taken up, that there was between God and us: and ſo theſe

theſe thoughts and ſuſpicions, that he is armed with vengeance againſt us, and that it may be ſpeedily executed upon us are removed: So that as *Jacobs* fear of *Laban* was taken off, when there was a ſolemn Covenant entred into by them on both ſides; ſo the ſlavith fear in the Soul will be hereby for the preſent re-
Gen. 31. moved, and by degrees abate, and decay in the Chriſtians heart more and more.

5. All our unwillingneſs to come unto and before God, will be taken away, and our boldneſs in comming to him to the throne of grace will be increaſed: yea it will breed an earneſt longing to be in Communion with him: for though *two cannot walk together except they be agreed*; yet they can meet and walk delightfully together, when they are agreed. All that loathneſs and ſhieneſs will be taken out from us, and we ſhall be brought to delight in his preſence: See it in *David* who could ſay God was his God, he could alſo long to come and appear before God *as the hart panteth after*

ter the Water-Brooks, Pſal. 42. 1, 2.

An Anſwer to ſome few Objections lying in the way that might ſeem to be made againſt this way of tranſacting with God, in particular and expreſs Covenant.

Object. 1. *There is no precept for this in all the Scripture.*

Anſw. 1. It is enough that it is warranted by the practice, and example of the Saints of God, in the Word, (which is proved abundantly in the ſecond Scripture-evidence, *Snp. p.* 16. Where it hath been ſufficiently ſhewed that God's Saints have particularly owned God, and appropriated him unto themſelves, as their own God: Pſal. 67. 6. *God even our own God ſhall bleſs us*; and have alſo engaged themſelves to God, in a particular manner in duty and obedience, which is ground enough for ſuch a practice.

Anſw. 2. To the real, and ſerious, and inward doing of this, all are bound that intend to be ſaved. Rom. 6. 13. *Yield your ſelves unto God*, with 2 Chron. 30. 8. and

Rom. 12. 1. *I beſeech you Brethren by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies, a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,* &c.

Anſw. 3. I grant that we are not bound to this external formal doing of it, in ſuch a manner, as a matter that is neceſſary to Salvation, ſo as that every Chriſtian muſt of neceſſity do it, if he ever means to go to Heaven, or partake of the benefit of the Covenant (this hath been ſpoken to before alſo) but as an excellent expedient, for the comfort of our Souls, in aſſuring our ſelves of the partaking of the benefits of the Covenant, and keeping the heart more firm and cloſe to God, in an holy Covenant-Converſation, and walking in order to Salvation.

Anſw. 4. This is but doing the ſame thing in another way, which hath been already done, and that often (it may be) and many ways too, as to the ſubſtance thereof; for I take theſe things for granted, (1.) That every true Chriſtian hath done this already in his heart. (2.) That every perſon in the viſible Church

Church hath done this virtually in his Baptiſm, (as before) and in the primitive times, none were baptized without an expreſs Covenanting, wherein they renounced the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and engaged themſelves to Chriſt, and promiſed to obey him: I ſhall refer you for more (yet not much) of this to Mr. *Baxters Saints reſt*, *Edit.* 8. p. 149. *Edit.* 9. p. 143. The Queſtion was propoſed. *Abrenuncias*? that is, doſt thou renounce? &c. Anſ. *Abrenuncio*, I do renounce. Q. *Credis*? doſt thou believe? *Credo*, I do believe. Now if it was done actually by perſons aged at their Baptiſm, afore-time, openly, and before others, though in few words, Why is it not warrantable to be done by any now, in a more full and large way either openly, or privately in this expreſs way, here treated and diſcourſed of, as God ſhall incline the hearts of any amongſt us? Further conſider, (3.) How often do men do it actually in their own perſons at the Lords Table? even as often as they

come to partake of the ſame. For what elſe is ſet forth by theſe Sacramental actions of every Communicant in their participation, that being alſo a Sign and Seal of the Covenant, they take God to? be their God, and Jeſus Chriſt to be their alone Saviour, and every one doth this for himſelf, and by the ſame reaching forth of the hand, as he doth receive Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf, ſo doth he as it were give up the hand to God, and thereby his whole ſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, (according to the former obſervation,) to become one of his people, and Servants, thereby reſigning himſelf up to him, to be wholly his, and at his Command. (4.) How often do men do this alſo on their ſick-beds? their reſolution is very earneſt and ſtrong, and how often doth it iſſue forth into expreſs promiſe? how apt are men to purpoſe and promiſe both, when death and judgment look them in the face? that they will become the Lords, are grieved that ſin hath ſwayd them ſo much, and that they have ſerved it ſo long,

Sup. ſcrip'. Arg. 10

long, and if it ever pleaſe the Lord to ſpare them, recover them, and continue them longer in the world, they will be only for the Lord, and for no other, that they will drudg for the World, fulfil the luſts of the fleſh no longer, nor ever any more as they have done, *make proviſion* for it *to fulfil them.* Theſe things are not only determined in mens breaſts, but uttered by their tongues, and with their mouths too, at ſuch a time: and is not this the ſame thing, the lawfulneſs of which we hereby labour to juſtify and eſtabliſh? (5.) Nay further yet, we find this occaſionally done, by Gods Saints, upon ſome extraordinary deliverance out of eminent and particular troubles. See this clear in the Prophet *David's* practice, Pſal. 116. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant, and the Son of thine hand-maid, thou haſt looſed my bonds.* The Pſalm was penned as moſt (and moſt rationally too) agree, upon the ſame occaſion as *Pſal.* 18. (as may be ſeen by comparing ſeveral verſes of

that and this together). Now upon occaſion of this deliverance (which was from the hand of all his enemies, & from the hand of *Saul*, *Pſ.* 18. *Title.*) the Prophet breaks out into expreſs acknowledgment of his obligation to God, and of his own reſignation of himſelf to him accordingly. Now all theſe things being conſidered, and ſeriouſly laid together, may we not reaſonably conclude, that a perſon upon deliberate and weighty conſideration, may take any ſuch form of words, as are drawn up by either of theſe ſerious Divines Mr. *G.* or Mr. *A.* or any other, or any that they may draw up themſelves from their own experience, according to the Scripture, and having done the preparatory duties there directed to, fall down before God, and ſolemnly undertake the engagement there propoſed, and a verbal profeſſion of his acceptation of God, & his Son, and Covenant, according to the tenour of that form there drawn up and expreſſed.

Object. 2. *But* (ſaith a worthy Divine) *God never makes a Covenant*

nant with a ſingle perſon perſonally, and individually, that all others are unconcerned in it, but with whomſoever God enters into Covenant, that perſon is a repreſentative of others, and is to be looked upon as a publick perſon; otherwiſe God ſhould make as many Covenants as there are perſons, which is the greateſt abſurdity to aſſert, &c. *Mr. Wills's morning Exerciſe on* Rom. 5. 12.

Anſw. 1. This is true, if it be ſuppoſed that God makes different Covenants as to the matter of them, as the Covenants of Works and Grace were; and this is the very ground upon which this paſſage was uttered, and that which it doth purpoſely drive at, it being ſpoken about the Covenant with *Adam* and all mankind in him, and with Jeſus Chriſt and the elect of God in him: For as *Adam* in the firſt Covenant of Works, ſtood as the repreſentative of all mankind, that ſhould deſcend from him by ordinary Generation; ſo Chriſt in the ſecond Covenant of Grace, did ſtand as a publick undertaker, in the be-

half of all thoſe, whom God had appointed to Salvation.

Anſw. 2. But this doth not hinder, but that God may enter into Covenant with many perſons, particularly and individually, that Covenant being the ſame with all & every one of them: not only with the perſon of the repreſentative himſelf, but alſo with every particular perſon of that Collective body included in him; that is to ſay, every particular perſon of that numerous multitude obliged to God, upon the termes of one an the ſame Covenant, in that common or publick perſon, may ſue out, claim and appropriate, or apply to themſelves in due time the benefits thereof, and alſo, may parttcularly tranſact with God, in an holy giving up themſelves to him, for the performance (through the ſtrength of his own grace) of that duty, to which they are bound in the participation of thoſe priviledges. So God did with all and every particular of mankind under the Covenant with *Adam.*

And

And ſo with every particular elect perſon in the Covenant of Grace through Jeſus Chriſt: theſe two do not interfere, nor claſh one with or againſt another, (*viz.*) God taking ſuch a number though never ſo numerous, or many, into Covenant in the repreſentative, and yet entring into Covenant particularly, and with every one of them apart, and in their own perſons, inſomuch that every one of them may be concerned to lay hold on it, as being bound in the ſame terms with the repreſentative.

Object. 3. *But doth not this ſeem too much to ſavour of ſeparation, and look too much like that dividing practice of ſome in the Church, who, many of them, otherwiſe good men (as it is to be hoped) do yet gather themſelves out of, and ſeparate themſelves from the Communion of the viſible Church, and enter into an expreſs and explicite Covenant one with another? how may theſe two be ſaid to differ one from another?*

A. For the ſolution of this Objection ſeveral things are to be conſidered.

1. It will tend much to the

clearing of the caſe, to unfold in brief the nature of that expreſs Covenant, of theſe perſons mentioned; for by diſcerning what this is, we ſhall be the better able to diſcern the difference between it, and that we are now diſcourſing of.

For the nature of that Covenant (as far as by reading yet I do underſtand) it is this: A Combination or joyning together of ſeveral Chriſtians, by mutual Conſent, and open and expreſs Covenanting (to uſe their own very words) to walk together with ſuch a body of Saints, in a participation of all the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt.

2. But to this we may ſay, as God of the Jews ſervices, who hath required this at their hands? to make ſuch a Covenant as this is? we cannot find any ſuch thing in all the whole Word of God, either Commanded by Chriſt, or practiſed by any former primitive Church. It is true, the Scriptures mention a general implicite Covenant of the Goſpel (as ſome Divines call it in oppoſition to that of thoſe Brethren fore-

fore-ſpoken of) or Covenant of Chriſtianity, which all profeſſing Chriſtians entred into, by their admiſſion unto the Sacrament of Baptiſm,& live in the profeſſion, of and hold to, whereby they are bound to acknowledg God as their only Lord,and Jeſus Chriſt as their only Head, Husband and Commander, that they will conform to all his Laws and Ordinances appointed in his Word: but of peoples openly Covenanting ſo to do with one another, and only in this or that Society, as it were apart from all the reſt of the particular Congregations of the Catholick Viſible Church, we never read of: As favourable a judgment paſt on this practice as any I know, I ſhall inſert of a diſſenting Brother from it. [I dare not make a particular explicite holy Covenant, to be the form of a particular Church — becauſe I find no mention of any ſuch Covenant,beſides the general, impoſed on Churches, nor Example, or Warrant for it in all the Scriptures; and therefore I cannot account it an

Mr. Hudſon of the Catholick Viſ. Ch. p. 19.

an Ordinance of God, but a prudential humane device, to keep the members togethet, which in ſome places and caſes may happily be of good uſe, ſo it be not urged as an Ordinance of God, and ſo it be not uſed, to enthral any, and abridg them of liberty of removal into other Places, and Congregations for their convenience, or urged as the form of a Church: I deny not that mutual Conſent of perſons within ſuch a vicinity to join together conſtantly in the Ordinances of God under the inſpection of ſuch & ſuch officers is requiſite to a particular Congregation.] To which joyn that which another ſaith; The Covenant of the Goſpel or Chriſtianity, as it engageth them to God, ſo to one another, to walk in all the ways of God, and to watch over one another, and that primarily too; their explicite conſent only is a renewing of that Covenant [redacted] ties the knot faſter to a neceſſary duty.

Mr. Cawdrey inconſiſt. of Indep. with the Script. and it ſelf p. 101.

3. The conſideration and laying together of all theſe things, will help us to ſee wherein the difference

of

of theſe two do ly, which is very great and manifold.

1. This expreſs Covenanting openly to walk in ſuch a way, &c. is not at all warranted in Scripture as this is, though not by any expreſs precept, yet by propheſy, and practice of the Saints of God, as may be (before) ſeen; to which add one more of *Jacob* to all the reſt; ſee Gen. 28. 20, 21. *And Jacob vowed a vow, ſaying, if God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, ſo that I come again to my Fathers houſe in peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God.* Which words are not to be looked upon as an indenting with God, or propoſing conditions to God, upon which he would (or otherwiſe would not) take or accept God to be his; but a choice, and ready acceptance of God, upon any (his own) conditions be they never ſo mean or low, according as he had promiſed to be a God to him, as well as to *Abraham* and *Iſaac* before him.

2. This

2. This open Covenanting (*viz.*) with this or that Society, is apparently tending to diviſion, and ſeparation, and thereby the members of one Congregation are parted from another, as to the participation of all Goſpel-ordinances, but this is not ſo in this of our particular tranſacting with God, this being the only fruit to bring the heart more near to God, and unto a better conformity to his will in an holy Converſation.

Mr. Cawdrey p. 101. *4 laſt lines to the end of that parag.*

3. In the term to which it drives, the one to a Combination one with another, and ſo to this or that particularSociety, but the other only to a more firm union of the whole perſon, in heart and life, to God and Jeſus Chriſt.

4. They differ in this, in that they make their open Covenanting to be the formality of a Church-member, & ſo this muſt follow, that a Church cannot be without it, nor are there any rightly admitted but in this way, which no-where hath a *Probatum eſt* by Chriſt, or any of the Apoſtles; but as to this particular.

cular tranſacting with God (of which we treat) we ſay, that it neither gives being to a Church-member, nor yet to a member of Chriſt; for this a man may be, though this be not done as aboveſaid (*viz.*) a true member of Chriſt, and his Church too; only this excites to the keeping of the heart and life in better order towards and before God.

5. The one is privately done, between God and a Chriſtians own heart, in his Cloſet, the other is openly done, before the Face of a whole Society.

The ſum of all is this: 1. The one hath warrant, Gods Word in the other hath no Foundation there. 2. The one tends to ſeparation, the other not ſo, only for a man to ſeparate himſelf from Sin and Satan, to God and his Service, but not from any part of God's Church. 3. The one is abſolute, the other relative. 4. Without the one (if we believe them) no man can be a true Church-member, but without this formal expreſs doing of the o-

ther

ther, a man may be a true member of Chriſt and his Church too. Only let him look to it, that he truely believes in Chriſt, repents of ſin, and obeys God. 5. The one done privately, the other publickly and openly.

I ſhall cloſe up all with a ſerious Wiſh or two about this matter.

1. How could I heartily wiſh, that no perſon that is virtually in Covenant with God, were Ignorant of that Covenant, wherein he is bound to him. Ah! how many be there, that Conſider not at all that they are, nor know or underſtand what it is ſo to be. How ſad is it as to be Ignorant of all others, ſo of this ſo precious a priviledg, and comfortable eſtate! I wiſh that all perſons would ſeriouſly mind it more, and meditate of it, that they may apprehend, diſcern, and perceive thoſe obligations that lye upon them.

2. How could I further wiſh with all my Soul, that thoſe that

cannot

cannot but confeſs, and acknowledg this, would not ſo ſlight and neglect it as they do, remember often that the vows of God are already upon you in ſome ſence, as to your Baptiſmal Covenant and vow, and is this a light matter? is God's Condeſcenſion thus to vouchſafe to deal with you nothing? is your reſignation of your ſelves, and obligation to an holy God nothing to you? however you do make light of it, it will be required of you every one another day.

3. How could I again earneſtly wiſh, that every Soul would often ſeriouſly renew their Covenant with the Lord. Renew your Repentance, and Godly Sorrow for your ſins and failings, and for your being unſteadfaſt in the Covenant, and renew your actings of Faith, afreſh on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Mediator of the Covenant, ſuing out the benefits of his blood, the blood of the Covenant, which are the priviledges contained in the Covenant; yea further, that you would

would deal in this particular expreſs way, debated here, proved, and evidenced not only to be warrantable, but alſo wonderouſly profitable, follow thoſe ſerious and ſpiritual directions propoſed by Mr. *R. A.* that ſo you may once in good earneſt compleat this work.

4. Having dealt thus ſeriouſly, I wiſh you yet ſtill to be careful and watchful over your ſelves, that you do not forſake this Covenant, that you would conſider, what a weighty matter is done now by you, how ſad to be found a Covenant-breaker: often think how grievouſly God complains of ſuch perſons, Pſal. 78. 8. *And might not be as their Fathers, a ſtubborn, and rebellious Generation, a Generation that ſet not their heart aright, and whoſe Spirit was not ſtedfaſt with God*; and further ver. 37. *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant*; and again. ver. 57. *But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their Fathers, they were turned*

ed aſide like a deceitful bow: And how ſevere God Almighty will prove, and ſhew himſelf againſt all thoſe that do thus abominably take his name in vain.

5. Finally, I wiſh all perſons to ſee to it that they walk worthy of it, and anſwerable to it, in that holy, ſtrict, pure, and upright way of Obedience, which God calls for in that chearful dependence on God, and Jeſus Chriſt, and in that pure Converſation which the holy Covenant requires. Suffer not the remainders of unbelief in your hearts to cauſe you to depart from the living God; and let not that hand be lifted up againſt God, which you have lifted up to him in this tranſaction. Beware of your ſelves, that your practice and Converſation be not unſuitable, but every way conformable thereunto; that ſo you give not God cauſe to upbraid you, as we read, Pſal. 50. 16, 17. *What haſt thou to do —— to take my Covenant in thy mouth? ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction*

ction, and caſteſt my words behin
thee? I wiſh unfeignedly that a
thoſe upon whom theſe ſtrong an
holy obligations lie, might have
Converſation alike to that of *Levi*,
whom God commends as a patern
unto others, and reproves the
Prieſts for diſformity thereunto;
(I know this Covenant ſpoken in
this place, had a peculiar reſpect to
that Tribe) yet his holy Converſa-
tion, is in a moſt ſtrict and exact
manner poſſible to be imitated
by every true Chriſtian in Co-
venant with God; ſee it recorded
Mal. 2. 5. *My Covenant wa*
with him of Life and Peace, and
I gave them to him, for the fear
wherewith he feared me, a
was afraid before my name. verſ.
6. *The Law of truth was in hi*
mouth, and iniquity was not found
in his lips, he walked with me in
Peace and Equity, and turned
(himſelf chiefly, as well as) *ma-*
ny (others) *from iniquity.* The
Lord keep, and uphold us by his
free Spirit, in an holy Covenant-

Con-

Converſation, anſwerable to our profeſſed, and I hope real Eſpouſals to God, and Jeſus Chriſt here, untill the marriage of the Lamb be come in the Kingdom of Heaven: *Amen.*

FINIS.

THE NEARNESS OF God's Covenant-People Unto Him.

Being the Sum of two Sermons, preached on *Psalm*, 148. 14*th* verſ. laſt part.

Added as a motive to provoke Chriſtians to, and to promote the great deſign of particular expreſs-Covenanting with God.

By *SAMUEL WINNEY*, ſometimes Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Glaſton* in Somerſetſhire.

London, Printed for *Thomas Cockeril* at the *Atlas* in *Cornhil*, near the Royal Exchange, 1675.

To the Reader.

Chriſtian Reader,

HAppineſs is the Vote of all men: But though all deſire it, yet moſt take the wrong courſe to the attaining of it; as if one ſhould intend a voyage to the Eaſt and Sail quite Weſtward, *Auſtin* reckons up 288 opinions of the Philoſophers about Happineſs, and they have all ſhot wide of the mark. We muſt not weigh happineſs *populari trutina*, in the World's Ballance, but in the *ballance of the Sanctu-*

ary. Doubtleſs the *Pſalmiſt* did hit upon the right. Pſal. 144. 15. *Happy is the people whoſe God is the Lord.* God is the *Summum bonum*, or chief Good. In the chief Good there muſt be. 1. Suavity, it muſt be delitious, cauſing a jubilation, or extaſy of Joy. And where can we ſuck thoſe pure, quinteſſential Comforts, which do raviſh the Soul with ſweet delight, but in God? * Pſal. 16. 11. *In thy preſence is fulneſs of Joy.* 2. Tranſcendency; the chief Good muſt have an innate, ſparkling Beauty, Superior to all other. God is the ſpring of Being, who doth enrich and beſpangle the whole Creation; *the Cauſe is more noble than the Effect;* He muſt needs infinitely out-ſhine all ſublunary Glo-

* *In Deo quadam dulcedine delectatur anima, immo rapitur,* Aug.

Glory. God is better than the Soul, than the Angels, than Heaven. 3. Duration; the chief Good must run parallel with Eternity. * God *abides King for ever.* Psal. 29. 10. Eternity is a Flower of his Crown; he is an inexhaustible treasury of Goodness. So that God being the *chief Good,* the enjoyment of God is the sole thing which Crowns us with Blessedness. And how doth God come to be our God but by *choosing* him? It is one thing for the Judgment to *approve* of God, and another thing for the Will to *chuse* him. Many are in their Judgments convinced that God is the most amiable Object, but they are swayed another way: their Corruptions are stronger than their

* 'ουκ ἔχει τέλος Chryſ.

Convictions. But we must upon mature deliberation προσμένειν τῷ κυρίῳ *Cleave to the Lord*, Acts 11.23. We must choose him though with Affliction, *Heb.* 11.25. Religion is not a matter of chance but of *choice*, Psal. 119. 30. *I have chosen the way of truth.* This choosing of God for our God. 1. Presupposeth *an enlightned mind.* We must understand those illustrious Perfections which are in God, his Wisdom, Holiness, Veracity, Bounty; as Knowledg ushers in *Faith. Psal.* 9. 10. so it precedes *choice.* 2. It denotes a singling out God from all other Objects to set our heart upon. While others Court the World, and like *Apollo* embrace the Lawrel-Tree in stead of *Daphne*, the

* *Nemo fortuito fit bonus.*

the Believer saith as *Asaph*, Ps. 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* and as *Jacob* Gen. 28. 21. *The Lord shall be my God.* This Choosing God is that in which the *vital part* of Christianity consists: Affections not grounded upon a judicious Choice die and vanish. That fruit cannot last which wants a root to grow upon. This choosing God is a blessed sign we love God, and belong to him; our choosing God is but the result and effect of his choosing us, *John* 15. 19. And where there is this chusing of God, there will be a *devoting* ourselves to him. Ps. 119. 38. and a solemn *entring into Covenant with him*; Jer. 50. 5. *Come and let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant*

After Choice follows [illegible] *Matrimonial Bond*, and [illegible] is this more than a confirming our *Baptismal Vow*, which we have so often renewed and ratified in the Lord's Supper? These things are the subject-matter of the ensuing Treatise, wherein the Reverend Author hath (so far as I have read) taken good pains, and given the World a taste of that Savoury gracious Spirit which resides in him: his whole Design in this book, is, to discover the intrinsecal Excellencies in God, which may hasten our Choice of him for our supream solace and Portion. As also to make us break off our Covenant with Sin, and engage in Covenant with the high God: by vertue whereof, we procure that great

great Dignity to be matched into the Crown of Heaven. The Lord give an effectual bleſſing, and ſucceſs to this preſent Diſcourſe; and cauſe Souls to enter into a more ſtrict way of Communion with him: Which is the earneſt prayer of him who is,

Octob. 28. 1674.

Thy Friend, and well-wither in Spiritual-Affairs,

Thomas Watſon.

THE

PREFACE.

Courteous Reader,

I *Do here ingenuously confeſs, that taking up a Book in my houſe, and looking on the names of ſome books at the end of it, I there met with a diſcovery of a Diſcourſe on this ſame Subject, both for matter and text, a Diſcourſe I ſay, of a very Reverend Divine, Mr.* Ri-

chard Vines; *but I can and must as truely acquaint thee, that it was after these Meditations of mine were studied, preached, and intended for the press: and having transiently viewed it (for I have not had time, for various diversions, to read it over, though I believe near as short as my own, and indeed one main reason was the fitting my own for, and hasting it to the press)* I find that his and mine differ very much as to the method of the handling of this blessed Priviledg; and I have read from St. Austin, that it's very profitable for divers

to

to handle the ſame point, alii ſic, alii autem ſic, *ſome in this wiſe, ſome otherwiſe. Whatſoever came from him muſt needs be excellent good, yet ſith that may be out of the preſs, and known to very few but in and about* London, *and ſcarce to be got; I judg this as it cannot detract from the worth, ſo nor prejudice the eſteem, and I hope will never hinder the peruſal of that; leaving both that, this and thee to the, bleſſing of the Almighty, and not daring, but out of an ingenuous plain heartedneſs to give thee this notice, being my ſelf ac-*

cidentally acquainted with it;

I remain

From my Study, *Aug.* 28. 1674.

thine in the Service of the Gospel,

S. W.

God's

Gods Covenant-People near unto him, *Pſal.* 148. part of the laſt *verſ.*

A People near unto him.

THis Pſalm is of the number of them, that are called Euchariſtical, pen'd by way of thankſgiving to God, wherein, the Prophet doth exhort all the Creatures to that Duty, both that are in Heaven, and that are one Earth too; and I cannot better diſtribute them, than it is already done in the Contents preſixt before it, with a very little variation. 1. We find all things in Heaven; all things Celeſtial exhorted ſo to do, in the four firſt verſes, *Praiſe the Lord from the Heavens*, ver. 1. *Praiſe him all ye his Angels*, verſ. 2. *All his Hoſts praiſe him, Sun, Moon, Stars*, verſ. 3. *&c.* and there is good Reaſon ſubjoyn'd,

verſ. 5, 6. *For he commanded, and they were created, and he hath eſtabliſhed them for ever and ever,* &c. 2. All things Terreſtrial from the 7th verſ. to the 13th verſ. wherein we may obſerve, all things inanimate, or life-leſs are exhorted to bleſs God, with all things animate or living. 1. Irrational Creatures, *Beaſts and all Cattle, creeping things.* 2. Rational Creatures of all ranks, *Kings of the Earth, and all Princes, and all Judges of the Earth*; of all ages, *young Men and Maidens, old Men and Children*: and here is good reaſon here ſubjoyn'd too, firſt, from what God is in himſelf. verſ. 13. *His Name is excellent, and his Glory above the Earth and Heavens.* 2dly, From what he hath done for his own People, verſ. 14, & ult. *He hath exalted the Horn of his People*, that is, the dignity, proſperity, and plenty of his People. After which the Prophet goes on to ſet forth the title, that is given to them; they are ſaid to be *his people*, and ſtiled *Saints*; then ſpecifies who they be (viz.) *the people of Iſrael*, the

the alone people, that were in Covenant with God in all the world at that time. 3. Then ſhews their Priviledg, what their happineſs was, in the words of the Text, *They are a people near unto him.* So that in ſhort the words lay before us, the priviledg, happineſs and dignity of the Saints and People of God, that are in Covenant with him; which I ſhall lay before you in this Obſervation.

Doct. That God's Church & People are near unto him: or, God's Saints, and Covenant-people, are a people near unto him: or, as word for word, it may be rendered, His near people, God's true Iſrael is his near people. And beſides what is ſpoken in this Text, I ſhall confirm it by the conſideration of one Text of Scripture more, in which we may obſerve one paſſage, wherein the very Priviledg that is here expreſly ſpoken, is ſtrongly implyed. *Jer.* 6. 8. *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee,*

affixum pronomen pro Separato.
עמו קרובו *pro* קרוב לו *M. P. Syn. ex Geiſtr.*

כן זקע נפשי ממך according to the Original Language, Left my soul be disjoynted from thee, a metaphor from a Limb thrust out of his place, and put out of joynt. There is as great a Nearness between God and his people, (a Nearness of Union, of which afterward) as there is between a mans Limbs and Joynts one to the other, and you know, that they are so near, that it is an impossible thing to separate them, without great pain and difficulty one from another "Intimating, what a pain "and grief it is to God to leave or "cast off a people, whom he is once "in league with, and with how "much difficulty he is drawn "thereunto.

ne luxata recedat anima mea abs te. Buxt. Lex.

Annotat. in Loc.

All that I shall open in the Explication of this Truth, I shall draw up into this

Query; How, and in what regard, are God's Saints, and Covenant-people said to be a People near unto him, and whence it is. And that through God's assistance, I shall endeavour to open to you, in five or six particulars.

First,

First, They are ſaid to be near to God, in regard of God's Nearneſs unto them, and ſo this Nearneſs is a paſſive Nearneſs: and ſome critically obſerve, they muſt be Near to God if he be Near to them. Nearneſs comes to paſs, by the approaching motion of one thing to another, now if God be nigh unto his People, and approacheth unto them, certainly then, they muſt be near unto him alſo, and ſo there is a mutual Nearneſs between God and his People; this is according to the direction the holy Ghoſt gives by the Apoſtle, James 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* Now that God is Near unto his People, the Scripture is as full of it, as can be deſired. *Deut.* 4. 7. It is the great Commendation of the People of Iſrael: *For what nation is there ſo great who hath God ſo nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things,* that we call upon him for. Pſal. 145. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him.* The like paſſage in Pſal. 34. 18. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a*

Exponi poteſt paſſive q. d. *populo cui ille eſt propinquus.* Muis ex. Ab. Ez. M. P. ſyn. Crit.

broken heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a Contrite Spirit. This then is the firſt regard, wherein Gods People are ſaid to be Near to him; (*viz.*) God's Nearneſs unto them.

2. In regard of Affection to them, he is, and is ſaid to be Near to them. Lord help us to believe it, God's People ſometimes can't hardly believe it; you know theſe People whom we by love account dear, we account alſo to be very Near to us. Dearneſs and Nearneſs are here Convertible. Now God's People are *the dearly beloved of his Soul*, Jer. 12. 7. in Original but one word, I have given the dearly beloved of my Soul. [*Heb.* the love] into the hands of her enemies. And that is one of the titles Chriſt gives his Church, throughout the whole *Song* of *Solomon*; My Love, my Dove, &c. So near to him the Church deſireth to be, that *Song.* 8. 6. ſhe prays, *Set me as a Seal on thy heart*, What is the meaning of that? in ſhort, love me dearly, and love makes as ſtrong an impre-

preſſion on the heart as a Seal doth upon any thing, to which it is applyed; ſhe deſires to be near the heart of Chriſt, and that his Love towards her may have deep impreſſions there, as the names of the twelve Tribes of Iſrael, had on the breſt-plate of Judgment, which *Aaron* did bear on his heart, when he went in into the Holy-place. *Exod.* 28. 21, 29. Further, ſhe prays there, *as a Seal upon thine arm, for love is as ſtrong as death*; in which ſhe deſires alſo his Compaſſion, and Affection. The Lord expreſſeth the ſame thing in a like phraſe, to his Church: ſaying, *Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands*, Iſa. 49. 16. I remember the Lord makes uſe of one expreſſion more, to ſet it forth by, the *ſignet on the right hand*, and that is near, in place and affection too. *Jer.* 22. 24. where the Lord ſpeaks of *Coniah*, one of the Kings of *Judah*; and ſaith to this purpoſe! *As I live ſaith the Lord, though Coniah the Son of Jehojakim, King of Judah, were their Signet on my right*

right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence, &c. A Man's Signet, that he wears on his right hand, what an eſteem and love hath he for that! yet ſaith God, though *he was as the Signet on my right hand, would I pluck thee thence:* Sin will make a ſeparation between a perſon or people, though near to him. And that is the ſecond thing, God's People are his dearly beloved, and ſo they are near upon the account of Affection.

3. In regard of Relation to God, they are nearly related to God; there is a Spiritual kin, and alliance between God and his people, you ſhall find nearneſs and kin are Convertible in the Scripture. Lev. 21. 2. *But for his kin that is near unto him, that is, for his Mother, and Father, and for his Son, and for his Daughter, and for his Brother,* and ver. 3. *and for his Siſter,—— That is nigh unto him,* &c. So that Kin and Nearneſs are joyned together, words of the ſame import.

Now

Now there is a twofold Relation betwen God and his People, which makes the Kin to be ſo Near.

1. By Regeneration and the new-birth.

2. By the Marriage-Covenant; and bleſſed are the people, that are in ſuch a Nearneſs unto God!

Firſt by Regeneration, and the new-birth: that is one way the kin comes in, (if I may ſo ſpeak) and therefore you ſhall find throughout the Scripture, that they are ſaid to be born of God, and born again; and hence is it that all that are regenerate are called the Sons and Daughters of the living God, and who are nearer to us than our Children; theſe are the Children of God, being born of him. Joh. 1. 12. *As many as believed, to them gave he power, to become the Sons of God*, How came they to be the Sons of God? ver. 13. ſhews, *which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* So in the Epiſtle of *John* throughout, are they ſaid

to

to be *born of God*: Now how near is the Father and Son, I need not tell you that are Parents. So near is the relation between God and his People, 2 Cor. 6. 18. *I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons, and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* What a Promise is this! he will receive them to be as near unto him, as he will receive *his own Son that serveth him.* And what a deal of Nearness of Affection as well as Relation is there in this case, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us! that we should be called the Sons of God.* 1 Joh. 3. 1. You that are parents, think on this; when you see your Children in the streets, or any where about you, Oh how are your hearts drawn out after them; learn hence, to be affected with the nearness, both of Relation and Affection, that is between God and his People; you cannot love your Children though your hearts run out after them, as God loves his Children; all the affection of all the parents in the World to their Children, is

but

but the drops of a bucket in Compariſon of God's love to his people and his Children.

2. By Marriage-Covenant are they Near to God. And this is ſo near a Relation, that all other kin are to be left for this Relation; they that are married, as to their Relation in the fleſh, are become one fleſh, ſo near they are, *Mat.* 19. 5. Juſt as *Adam* ſaid of the woman, when God brought her to him, *this is bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh*, Gen. 2. 23. Beloved, Gods people are his married people, and they are his eſpouſed people; full of this is the Scripture in many places. 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one husband, that I may preſent you a chaſt Virgin to Chriſt.* Hoſ. 2. 19, 20. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me, in righteouſneſs and in judgment and in loving kindneſs, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs, &c.* Jer. 3. 14. *turn Oh backſliding Children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you,* Iſa. 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thine husband, the*

Lord

Lord of hosts is his name. Oh what an husband is this! Every woman is apt to admire her own husband, but what an husband is this of Souls! Mark, how the Apostle doth improve this natural marriage to a Spiritual use. 1 Cor. 6. 16,17. *What, know ye not that he that is joyned to an Harlot is one body? for he saith, ye shall be one flesh,* ver. 17. *but he that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit.* The Apostles design is, to take off people from Fornication, and the argument is taken from the design of God in Marriage: God made Marriage that there might be an union betwixt the Man and the Woman. Now presently after Marriage, for persons to run away one from another, for a Man to make himself one body with an Harlot, it subverts the design of God in Marriage; and the Apostle improves it, in the next words, *He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit.* A Spiritual mystical Union there is betwixt God and his People, and I hope many that heard and now read this, have experience and assurance of it

it, and the Lord grant that more may. And here alſo are both the Nearneſſes joyned together, not only the Nearneſs of Relation, but of Affection: if the Affection be ſtrongly knit between the husband and the wife, there is no Affection ſtronger than that, and no leſs ſtrong and faithful between God and the Soul. All which ſhews, that they are related to God, as near as any Relation in the World.

3. I may yet add another Relation which is not ſo near as the former, that are already mentioned, though near alſo; that ſets forth this Nearneſs between God and his People: and that is that of Servants, God is the Maſter, and his People are the Servants too; and ſome Maſters and Servants are very dear one to another, a wonderful Nearneſs of Affection there is of ſome Maſters to their Servants, and of ſome Servants to their Maſters; though no Relation as to the fleſh by affinity, or Conſanguinity, yet they love them tenderly. I ſhall give you an inſtance of this in the Cen-

Centurion and his Servant, Luk. 7. 2. *A certain Centurions Servant who was Dear unto him was sick*, and he shewed that he was dear to him in his tenderness of him, in that weak Condition he was; and applying himself to Christ for him. *Moses* is called the Servant of the Lord, *Moses my Servant is dead*, saith God, and you know that expression, *Moses my Servant*, is a token of the great Affection God had to him, and an high honour and esteem, that after he was dead the *Almighty* confer'd upon him.

4. Nay observe, in the last place that God's People are as Near to him, and as Dear to him, as any of our Houshold, and Family are to us. And therefore are they called the houshold, and family of God. Eph. 2. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ*: Compare this with ver. 19. *Now therefore, ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the houshold of God.* Yea to close up this particular,

cular, whatsoever Relation may expreſs Nearneſs and Dearneſs, in that Relation ſtand God and his People each to other; and thus is the third thing fully proved.

4. They are near to God, in regard of Jeſus Chriſt; and that on two accounts:

1. Of Union to Jeſus Chriſt:

2. Of being purchaſed by Jeſus Chriſt.

Firſt, in regard of the Near Union there is between Chriſt and them. Nay and add to this, the Near Relation that is between Chriſt and them; and there is one, that renders theſe words, to this very ſenſe and purpoſe: A people Near unto him. One reads it very critically, the people of his Near one, or of him that is near to him, *viz.* God, of him that comes near to him as a Prieſt, and ſits at his right hand as a King, meaning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; now Chriſt is near to God, and there is none Nearer to God than he. So near

* *Populo propinqui ſui.* h. e. *eius qui accedit ad ipſum, ut ſacerdos, & ſedet ad dexteram eius, ut rex, nempe Chriſti.* M. P. ſyn. ex Gei. & Cocceio.

near that he is his only natural Son, the only begotten Son of God; nay he is God himself, he is of the same substance with the Father, one that accounts it *no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. and therefore call'd *God's fellow*, Zech. 13. 7. they are as near to him, as the members are to the body, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.* What a priviledg is here! you are the body of Christ, that is, the mystical body of Christ. Christ hath a natural body, and a mystical body; his natural body is that, which was made up of flesh & blood, formed by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin: But then his mystical body are all Christians, who are as really his members, as his Hands, and Arms, and Feet, and Eyes, and Legs were members of his natural body. Christ is the mystical Head of his Church and every believer is a mystical member of Jesus Christ: how fully yet doth the Apostle express this, to the same purpose, Eph. 5. 30. *For we are members of his body, of*

of his flesh, and of his bone. He speaks of the Marriage-Union in the neighbouring verses, much like that of *Adam* concerning *Eve* his wife, Gen. 2. *This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.* But saith the Apostle, *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his Church,* ver. 32. Further, if you observe the Nearness of relation they have to Jesus Christ, it will also appear how near they are to God. They are near to him, in regard of their kin and allyance to Christ too; He counts them in the neareſt Relation to himself, and therefore they must be near to God by vertue thereof: see it in that full Scripture, Mat. 12. 46, &c. *One said to him* (that is, to Christ) *behold thy Mother, and thy Brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.* 48. *But he answered, who is my Mother?* —— &c. 49. *And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, behold my Mother and my Brethren.* vers. 50. *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother and Sister,*

ſter, and Mother. Now if they be Near to Chriſt by vertue of relation, and Union, to him, as we have ſeen, they are in both theſe regards one together, and proved; then certainly, they muſt alſo be Near to God. So that that is the firſt regard, they are near to God on the account of Chriſt, (*viz.*) their Union and Relation to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, They are Near to God, with reſpect to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in regard they are the purchaſe of his blood. They are his purchaſed people, and that makes them Near to God; he hath *bought them to God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue and nation.* Rev. 5. 9. by the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, and by no other means, were we brought unto God. 1 Pet. 3. 18. *For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins,* the Juſt for the unjuſt, *that he might bring us to God.* We *had* never been brought unto God, had it not been for the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, whereby we *that were a-far off were made nigh.* Eph. 2. 14. Time was, when there was a great diſtance between God

and

and them, and when they were a great way off, what a ſad caſe was that! but being bought by Chriſt's blood, we were thereby brought nigh unto God alſo. How ſo? Why, we were brought nigh unto God by Chriſt's reconciliation, which he made for us to God; by his death and ſufferings. And we ſhall be wholly and fully brought nigh unto God hereafter, when we ſhall be brought into the Kingdom of God, where God & Jeſus Chriſt are, and we ſhall be with him for ever. Here are we brought nigh in regard of friendſhip, but not in regard of that fulneſs of fellowſhip which we ſhall enjoy in Heaven. And therefore are we ſaid *to be abſent from the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 6. *while at home in the body*. But there had been no enjoyment of God here, nor of the Kingdom of God hereafter, if Chriſt had not ſuffered, but now there's both: this is the fourth regard, in which we are ſaid to be nigh unto God.

5. They are ſaid to be a People Near to God, in regard of their Liberty

liberty of free acceſs unto God; they have the priviledg of approaching nigh to the throne of grace, and thereby draw nigh to God. And this the Apoſtle lays down by way of Encouragement and Counſel in two places of the *Hebrews*, Heb. 4. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in the time of need.* And all this is ſtill upon the account of Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe *we have ſuch a great high-Prieſt, that is paſſed into the Heavens.* Hence it is that we may *come boldly to the Throne of Grace.* Compare with ver. 14. ſo Heb. 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of Faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience.* This is the great priviledg of Chriſtians, that they are made *Kings, and Prieſts unto God, and his Father.* Now you know the Prieſts under the law, it was their place, and office to draw nigh unto God; as doth appear by theſe two places of Scripture, *Lev.* 10. 3. where when fire from Hea-

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ven had devoured *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the two Sons of *Aaron*, for offering ſtrange fire, *Moſes* uttered theſe words: *This is that the Lord ſpake, I will be Sanctified in them that come nigh me.* It was their Office to draw nigh to God, and for them to draw nigh to God with ſtrange fire, contrary to the very Command of God! therefore fire from Heaven came down upon them. See likewiſe, *Numb.* 16. 40. There, upon the occaſion of the deſtruction of *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* for offering Incenſe unto the Lord, which thing belonged only unto the Prieſt, the Cenſers were laid aſide to be a memorial to the Children of *Iſrael*, That *no ſtranger, that is not of the Seed of Aaron, come near to offer Incenſe before the Lord*: Now Jeſus Chriſt having made us Kings and Prieſts to God, this is the great Privilegd, that we have by him, that we may draw nigh unto God, *Heb.* 7. 19. and offer up our Prayers as Incenſe to God, together with all other our holy Duties, as ſo many *Spiritual*

Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 2. 5. *Being built upon him a Spiritual House, and Holy Priesthood, to that very end.* Jesus Christ is the person that doth approach nigh to God in our behalf. Jer. 30.21. *I will cause him to draw near and he shall approach to me, for who is he that engageth his heart, to approach unto me! saith the Lord.* Who is he that God will chuse to draw near unto him? Literally and primarily it may be understood of the civil Governour, but ultimately and consummately of Jesus Christ, (who undertook not his Office without Gods call) who in the behalf of believers, hath engaged his heart to approach nigh unto God, and we by him do draw nigh to God. Heb. 10. 19. *Boldness we have to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,* with Eph. 2. 18. *For through him we both have an access, by one Spirit unto the Father;* so Eph. 3.12. *In whom we have boldness, and access, with Confidence by the faith of him.* And what a Privileg is this, that every one of Gods Saints,

Saints and People, may have the liberty as often as they will, to approach nigh to God, to make their *requeſts in every thing by Prayer and Supplication!*

6. They are ſaid to be near unto God in regard of the Lord's choice and ſeparation of them, from, and and above all the People of the World unto himſelf; they are ſo, both from all eternity, and alſo in time; and this is ſpoken of particular perſons, and a whole People jointly. Obſerve both Elect according to the foreknowledg of God the Father; 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. they are his choſen people, Eph. 1. 4. *According as he hath choſen us in him, before the Foundation of the World:* thus for perſons. If you will obſerve it alſo, for a nation, or a people; Pſal. 135. 4. *For the Lord hath choſen Jacob for himſelf, and Iſrael for his peculiar treaſure.* To which join that place Iſa. 41. 89. *But thou Iſrael, art my Servant, Jacob whom I have choſen, the Seed of Abraham my friend; thou whom I have taken from the ends of the Earth, and ſaid*

unto thee, thou art my Servant; I have choſen thee and not caſt thee away. Hence are they ſaid to be a ſeparated People; ſo *ſhall we be ſeparated I and my People from all the people that are upon the face of the Earth,* Exod. 33. 16. ſo *David* Pſal. 4. 3. *The Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly unto himſelf,* therefore ſaid *to be a people of his inheritance,* Deut 4. 20. *and the lot of his inheritance,* Deut. 32. 9. *and his peculiar treaſure,* Exod. 19. 5. *peculiar people.* 1 Pet. 2. 9. and Chriſt tells the Diſciples, That *he had choſen them out of the World, and therefore the World hated them,* Joh. 15. 19. ſo that not only from eternity but in time, not only perſons but nations, God hath choſen to be his own people, above all the World beſides. And how great is the Priviledg to be God's choſen and peculiar People! and ſo made Near unto him: mind this I beſeech you; What a matter of ſpecial obſervance ſhould this be to us, that God doth take here and there, one, or two, or three above others

הפלה
Same word as ſeparated Exod.

חסיד
ſame as Saints in Text

others, ſpecially when God *Caſts away all the Wicked of the Earth like droſs*, as Pſal. 119. 119. as a man throws dirt out of doors, then to be choſen out of them that are caſt away, what a ſpecial favour is this! not to be caſt out as droſs, but made up as Jewels, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt, what grace is this!

7. And Laſtly, in regard of their daily cloſe walking with God, are they near to him. A Chriſtians Converſation is ſaid to be a walking with God; ſo ſaid of *Enoch*, *Gen.* 22. 24. twice together, it was his whole courſe, throughout all his life till God took him. Yea more fully a walking together, and they that walk together are Near each to other: though ſin makes a diſtance that God and a People can' twalk together, becauſe then they are not, cannot be agreed; yet being agreed and the proceſs made, they may and do very many of God's People walk together: not only in their duties, are they near to him, but in the whole courſe of their Converſation; their hearts

and Affections are ſtill with him, and his preſence is with them. And thus in their whole life is there a bleſſed Communion, kept up and maintained betwixt God and their Souls. And this is the laſt kind of Nearneſs, (*viz.*) the Nearneſs of Converſe and Holy Communion with God.

Thus very briefly, I have opened to you, the Explicatory part of this Obſervation. There remains yet the Application of all this, and I ſhall ſpeak ſomething to this purpoſe;

By way of { Information. Conſolation. Exhortation.

1. Uſe of Information; this diſcovers to us the great difference there is between Gods own Church and People, and others that are Worldly and Wicked men. God's Saints and People they are near to God, and all others are People far off from him; this is that difference that God hath made, between all the People of the World, and his own

own People and Saints. And as wicked men are ſeparated and far from God, ſo are they far from the People of God alſo; they are divided by God and ſeparated in regard of their eſtates here, and the work is ſtill doing till the end of the World ſhall come; and when he hath done this in time, then ſhall time have an end: but now they are ſeparated in regard of their eſtates only, hereafter they ſhall be ſeparated not only in regard of their eſtates but place alſo; on Earth there is no ſuch ſeparation, there is no poſſibility of being altogether ſeparated from the company of wicked men here; yea in the very Church it ſelf, whoſoever will be ſo, muſt needs go out of the World, 1 *Cor.* 5. 9, 10. hereafter the wicked ſhall be ſeparated to the fartheſt diſtance from God and the Saints too, that poſſible can be, they are here now far from him; *The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous*, Prov. 15. 29. what a Priviledg is that! that God is ſo Near to the Righte-

ous, that he heareth every one of their Prayers in the ſaddeſt ſtate, they can be here in the World! and what a Comfort and Encouragement is that to pray to God! there, God's hearing Prayer, is put contradiſtinct from God's being far from the wicked; and God is far from the wicked in this regard, that he hears none of their prayers, Pſal. 18. 41. *They cryed, but there was none to ſave them, even to the Lord, but he anſwered them not*, according to that Joh. 9. 31. *God heareth not ſinners*; that is, wilful and impenitent ſinners; but on the contrary, *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, that call upon him in truth*, Pſal. 145. 18. the Lord is ſo near to his People, that he dwels in his People, Iſa. 57. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the High and Holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and Humble Spirit*, &c. While men abide in their natural condition, God is far from them, and they are far from God. What a ſad con-

condition is it, to be at a diſtance from God, did men but believe and ſeriouſly weigh it! on the other hand, this is indeed the high Prerogative of Gods People to be ſo Near to him. Even here in this World, what a great dignity, do people think it to be, to be near to a great perſonage, whether the King, or if it be one Inferiour! and indeed it is a noble Priviledg to be nigh unto the Kings Perſon, either in regard of kin or alliance, or to be converſant about him by way of attendance. And how greatly do they take on them, that are near the blood Royal in deſcent, or but near a Noble-man by way of ſervice? what honour and exaltation is it then to be near the living God in Spiritual kin and alliance! this is true Nobility, when God is the top of the kin, and Religion the root, ſaith one, and to be Converſant about the preſence of the Lord in Spiritual ſervices, and performances. It is the *periphraſis* or deſcription of Nobles, to be *near the Kings Perſon*, Jer. 52. 25. in

Heb. *That saw the face of the King*: to be about great and high persons is a great dignity; but how much more to *compass God about and to be round about him*; as the Saints are said to do, and to be, Psal. 7. 7. *So shall the Congregation of the people Compass thee about*, So Psal. 76. 11. let *all that be round about him, bring presents*! &c. Gods People are said to be round about him, as the 12. Tribes pitched round about the Tabernacle, *Numb.* 2. 2. and as the four Beasts, and four and twenty Elders were round about Gods throne, *Rev.* 4. 4. with 6. so the *Chaldee* expounded it; *Ye that dwell about the Sanctuary*, as the Nobles dwell round about the Kings Court: they see the Face of God, that are round about God and converse with God, and God and they speak together, as God is said to do to *Moses*, who could speak to God, when he would, and was near to God, a great while together, at some times; and God is said to speak *to Moses Face to Face, as a man speaketh unto his*

A. s. in Psal. 76.

his Friend, Exod. 33. 11. the ſame he is ſaid to do to *Iſrael* his people, (whom the Text tells us was *a people near unto him*) on mount *Sinai*, Deut. 5. 4. but now wicked men are afar off, they have no relation to God, nor affection from God; ſo ſaith David, *he knows the proud afar off*, Pſal. 138. 6. and as they are ſo they deſire to be, for, *They ſay unto God, depart from us*, Job 22. 17. thus do we ſee the firſt thing diſcovered to us, even the difference there is between Wicked and Godly men.

2. Uſe. By way of Conſolation; it is for Comfort to all the Saints and People of God, that do enjoy this Priviledg, that are indeed near unto God; and I ſhall tell you (brethren) there are divers Priviledges follow from this.

Firſt of all, God will be ſure to ſuffer none to do them harm that be near to him, or if he doth, he will avenge them. Would you not do ſo for them that are near you? If any ſhould come to hurt your Child, would you not ſave him

him if you could? If any body ſhould ſet on your wife, to do her any wrong or injury, you would do the utmoſt you could to avenge their quarrel: juſt ſo it is with God, *he ſuffered no man to do them wrong*, Pſal. 105. 14. *yea, he rebuked Kings for their ſakes*, 15. *ſaying touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm; or if they do, he will avenge them, and ſhall not God avenge his own Elect?* Luk. 18. 7, 8. *which cry unto him day and night, I tell you he will avenge them ſpeedily, although he bear long with them*; where the injury and wrong of GodsPeople are ſet forth by the injury done by a great perſon to a poor Widow, God avenging them; by the parable of a Judg, who though he *feared not God, nor yet regarded Man*, yet becauſe of the Widows importunity, would avenge her of her adverſrary: now if an unjuſt Judg will avenge, becauſe of importunity, a perſon that is no way allied to him; ſhall not the moſt righteous God, take Vengeance for the wrongs of his own Peo-

People, that are ſo near unto him? Now mind that, and comfort your ſelves, God will be careful of your ſafety; no body ſhall hurt you, or if they dare, and do endeavour it, *the Lord to whom vengeance belongeth,* will take your part, and take vengeance for you. It may be, you may ſuffer affliction for the Goſpels ſake, wicked men may be injurious to you, for Religions ſake; remember, there is a God that will take your part, that are thus nigh to him; and I could wiſh that all that are under ſufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake, might have Faith to live upon this Truth, and if God call us to more and greater ſufferings, we might treaſure up this Truth againſt ſuch a time comes.

2ly, God will fellow-feel with you too, if you are a People near unto him, and this Priviledg is as great, as the former; there is a famous Scripture for this, *Iſa.* 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them,*

them, and carried them all the days of old. The Chapter ſpeaks of the works God had done formerly for *Iſrael*, but principally with reſpect to the Wilderneſs; how pitiful was God to *Iſrael*, when they were in the Wilderneſs! and how did God ſhew himſelf to be concerned, in all the Affliction that did light upon them, by a compaſſionate Fellow-feeling! If any be ſick, or in Affliction, that be near to us, how ready are we to lay it to heart, how are we affected with it! ſo will God be with all our troubles, be they what they will be. And mark you, the ſame expreſſion is ſpoken concerning our inward Affliction, and remember it againſt the time that trouble comes; it is ſpoken of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Heb. 4. 14. *Seeing then we have a great high-Prieſt, that is paſſed into the Heavens, Jeſus the Son of God. — For we have not an high Prieſt, that cannot be touched with our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without ſin.* He was tempted to ſin, though he was not pre-

prevailed over by the temptation, and therefore Jeſus the Son of God, can be touched with the feeling of our temptations. Sometimes the violence of temptation is ſo ſtrong, and ſo hard to be dealt with, that were it not, that a perſon could look to Chriſts fellow-feeling, and to God's pitty, it were a cauſe not to be undergon. I believe I ſpeak to ſome that underſtand, and experience what I ſay now; if we commiſerate thoſe that be Dear and Near to us, (nay and thoſe that be not ſo, but in the common bonds of nature with us) ſo that we take what hath befallen them, as though it had fallen on our own ſelves, how much more will God! and bleſſed be God, that we are nigh to ſuch an one that can fellow-feel with us, if not, we were an undone people; that's the ſecond.

3. A third Priviledg is this, the advantage they have of prevailing with God, in the requeſts they do preſent to him; all their ſuits and requeſts ſhall be accepted and granted, and free and open acceſs to his

his preſence to ask any thing of him, and not be denied, ſtill asking according to his Will. And hence it is, that they are ſo prevalent with God, becauſe they are a people near to God, and becauſe they are ſo near to him, that is, ſo near to him that is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; hence it is, that they can have all their Payers anſwered, and all their petitions fulfilled, becauſe they are a People near to God; the Lord is near to anſwer all their Prayers; the Lord increaſe our Faith, for herein lyes much of the comfort of Chriſtianity. You know if a ſtranger come to requeſt any thing of us, or an enemy, we do not ſo much as look on them, nor grant them (though it ſhould not be ſo with us, and we ſhould not do ſo) but if our familiar friend requeſts any thing of us, he will ſoon prevail; if a wife come, and deſire her Husband to do ſomething for her, or a Child ſhould deſire his Father to do ſomething for him, or give ſomething to him, though another ſhould not, yet they ſhall prevail,

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why? Becauſe they be near to him. So it is with God, God's People are his Married People, his new-born Children, therefore they have ſuch prevalence with him in all their addreſſes unto him. They may freely, but humbly Converſe with him, and may have Communion with him, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. God Commanded, *Exod.* 25. 22. that there ſhould be a Mercy-ſeat, and over the Mercy-ſeat two golden Cherubims, and they ſhonld look one towards another; and when God did come and ſpeak to his People, the text tells us God promiſed, *There will I meet with thee, and there will I Commune with thee, from above the Mercy-Seat*; and hence the Apoſtle draws his encouraging argument, *let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace*, Heb. 4. 16. *that we may obtain mercy &c.* the Mercy-Seat in the Old-Teſtament, is the throne of Grace in the New.

4. Their protection is ſure, God will undertake for their defence, which is much of the ſame importance with the firſt; therefore I ſhall ſay by way of addition little of it here

here; their ſafeguard is ſure, becauſe God undertakes for them; They are as dear to him as the Apple of his eye, and he that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of my eye, ſaith God, *Zech.* 2. 8. and their ſafety is ſet forth by their Nearneſs to God, yea under the ſhadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, till theſe calamities be over-paſt, *Pſal.* 57. 1. I have covered thee in the ſhadow of mine hand. *Iſa.* 51. 16. he ſhall cover thee with his feathers, *Pſal.* 91. 4. nearer we can't be, nor yet ſafer.

5. They being a People nigh to God, God will provide for them too, and take care for their ſupply; will not an husband provide for his Wife? and a Father for his Children? O God be merciful to a great many Husbands and Fathers, that have no Compaſſion on their Wives and Children, but ſpend all they get, and undoe their poor families! but God is not ſuch an Husband, nor ſuch a Father, God hath laid a ſpecial charge upon Maſters of families, that they ſhould provide for their own houſhold; and if a man provide

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not for his own, and ſpecially them of his own houſe, he hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an infidel, ſaith God by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. How many ſuch Maſters and Parents are there in the pale of this viſible Church, that have the badg of Chriſtianity upon them, that conſume all in their luſts, and are in this ſenſe worſe than the Infidels, the Heathens, and Pagans! now will God lay that charge upon us, and will he not do it himſelf? doth God require us to provide for our houſhold, and will not God provide for his? are not God's People his houſhold, and ſo his own, as near as Wife, Children, and Servants? and will not God then take care of them? Will God teach us providence, and care for our Relations, and ſhall not God do ſo for his? When you want your bread, you that are poor remember this, if you be a People near unto God, he will provide for you; and this ſhould learn you the Apoſtles leſſon, to caſt all your care upon him, who careth for you, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. And what a mercy it

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here; their safeguard is sure, because God undertakes for them; They are as dear to him as the Apple of his eye, and he that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of my eye, saith God, *Zech.* 2. 8. and their safety is set forth by their Nearness to God, yea under the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, till these calamities be over-past, *Psal.* 57. 1. I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand. *Isa.* 51. 16. he shall cover thee with his feathers, *Psal.* 91. 4. nearer we can't be, nor yet safer.

5. They being a People nigh to God, God will provide for them too, and take care for their supply; will not an husband provide for his Wife? and a Father for his Children? O God be merciful to a great many Husbands and Fathers, that have no Compassion on their Wives and Children, but spend all they get, and undoe their poor families! but God is not such an Husband, nor such a Father, God hath laid a special charge upon Masters of families, that they should provide for their own household; and if a man provide

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not for his own, and ſpecially them of his own houſe, he hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an infidel, ſaith God by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. How many ſuch Maſters and Parents are there in the pale of this viſible Church, that have the badg of Chriſtianity upon them, that conſume all in their luſts, and are in this ſenſe worſe than the Infidels, the Heathens, and Pagans! now will God lay that charge upon us, and will he not do it himſelf? doth God require us to provide for our houſhold, and will not God provide for his? are not God's People his houſhold, and ſo his own, as near as Wife, Children, and Servants? and will not God then take care of them? Will God teach us providence, and care for our Relations, and ſhall not God do ſo for his? When you want your bread, you that are poor remember this, if you be a People near unto God, he will provide for you; and this ſhould learn you the Apoſtles leſſon, to caſt all your care upon him, who careth for you, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. And what a mercy it

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is to be able to beg our daily bread from God, upon this Relation, that we are a People nigh to him! will not God provide for his own? Surely he will. God that requires us to *do good to all men, but especially to the houſhold of Faith*, Gal. 6. 10. he himſelf is alſo good to all, by that general common Goodneſs which he extends to the whole Creation, *Pſal.* 145. 9. but ſpecially to his own *Iſrael*; *truely God is good to Iſrael*, Pſal. 73. 1. the *People near unto him*, (text). It's only the houſhold of Faith that is near to God, for Faith is the bond of our Union unto God and Jeſus Chriſt.

6. And Laſtly, remember and take comfort in this alſo, as you are now near to him here, ſo you ſhall be more near to him in Heaven hereafter; and this cloſeth up, and compleateth the Happineſs of the People of God, he will bring them all to be near to him in Heaven: methinks theſe things ſhould make our hearts a little burn within us, with affection, to be in a longing after this great Priviledg; remember,

ber, *you ſhall be as near to God as Heaven and Glory ſhall make you*; and how near will that be? God is near to you now and you are near to God now, but yet notwithſtanding in Heaven is the greateſt and chieſeſt Nearneſs. Here you have his preſence in a meaſure with many interruptions; here ſin, that makes a ſeparation between God and you; but hereafter, you ſhall fully, immediately, and for ever have his preſence, you ſhall never be excluded, or ſhut out of it; time will come when there will be nothing that ſhall ſtand and interpoſe between God and you, all that ſhall cauſe a diſtance ſhall be taken out of the way: Oh what a bleſſed time will that be!

3. Uſe. By way of Exhortation in two branches.

Firſt, Labour to make ſure with the greateſt diligence and ſpeed you are poſſibly able, that you are a People near unto God. And will not all thoſe things that I hinted, and propoſed to you, prevail with you? may not the Conſideration

deration of all those Priviledges, that follow upon this forenamed, that you are near to God, allure us, and prevail with us? do not be at a distance from God still, as you have been; may you not say truely *It is good for me to be near*, as David said, *It is good for me to draw near to God*? Psal. 73. 28. run through in your meditations, every one of the Priviledges I have mentioned, be not hearers or readers only, be perswaded then: methinks this one well-thought of before-named, of having every request answered, should be a mighty thing. It is a Priviledg beyond all imagination, sufficient to Provoke to the highest admiration, and greatest desire, and endeavour about this, that possible can be. But Consider on the other hand, what is the misery of being afar off from God, how great is the evil of being far off! why, *They that are far from thee shall perish, thou hast destroyed all that go a-whoring from thee*, saith David, Psal. 73. 27. well, it is a sad case then to be at a distance from him. If we do

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ſeriouſly lay it to heart, and this is the Condition of every man & Woman, as they come into the World, till Chriſt make them nigh; I pray God make you and me more Conſiderate of it: How long have you lived, and yet continue far from God! It would make ones heart to ake to conſider, how many years we have lived afar off, in point of reconciliation. Conſider one thing more, what Patience hath God exerciſed to you all this while, that he hath prevented your periſhing in that Condition! what wonderful Patience, & what a World of long-ſuffering hath God lengthned out towards you! Let me add one thing more, by asking you a queſtion, Will you live and die at laſt at a diſtance from God, and not be made nigh unto him? What do you ſay? If I ſhould ask every Man, and woman of you, as every one of you ought to apply the word of God to your ſelves, Art thou willing to live and dy and not be made near to God? what do your hearts ſay to this? the Lord God of Heaven

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by his Spirit awaken every one to a ſerious Conſideration of it: I dare ſay there is never a man or woman, if they were going to die this moment, but would be of this mind, that he might be near unto God; unleſs God had given them over unto a reprobate ſenſe, to be ſo blinded by the Devil in their wickedneſs, that they cared not what became of body, or ſoul, or any thing for ever. What a ſad thing, that many ſay in their hearts, with thoſe in Job 22. *Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledg of thy ways.* Theſe do not deſire God, or to be nigh unto him: but now weigh this, as if you were going to die, Would I be ſet at a diſtance from God for ever and for ever? and can I ever expect to be near to God hereafter, if I am afar off from God now?

Weigh theſe things above-mentioned in theſe five particulars, for method and memories ſake.

1. You came every one into the World, at a diſtance from God.

2. How

2. How long have you lived at a diſtance from him?

3. How much patience hath God exerciſed towards you all this while?

4. Whether you intend to live and die in that Condition? or

5. Whether you can expect to be near to God hereafter, if you be not near to but far off from God here? if you live and die at the ſame, yea greater diſtance, than you came into the World from God at, how far then will you be removed from God? and that for ever? if you be now ſo far by nature and continue all your lives widening the diſtance and pie without having it made up, you will never then come ſo near, as to ſee the face of God with Comfort. I beſeech you look to it, for theſe be the great truths, yea the greateſt concernments of your Souls.

Query. *What ſhall I do, what Courſe would you adviſe me to take, that I may be near to God?*

Anſw. 1. Pray to God for the Spirit of regeneration, that thou

maist be born of God, thereby thou wilt be made partaker of the Divine Nature; if thou art born of the Spirit, then wilt thou be near to God; As near and as dear as a Child is to his Father.

2. Beg of God, to communicate to you the Benefits of Christ's Sufferings. For it is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that makes us nigh to God, Eph. 2. 14. *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle-Wall of partition,* &c. between God and men, as well as between Jew and Gentile. Oh that we might by Faith, and Prayer still apply him to our Souls; *He suffered the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us near to God.* Now beg of God to bring you nigh to him by his Sons blood: I wish I could engage every person of you, not to lie down this night, till you had prayed this Prayer, that you might be brought nigh to God by the blood of his Son.

3. Lay hold on the Covenant of God, the Covenant between God and his people, it is a matrimonial Cove-

Covenant, a Marriage-Covenant: now it is the work of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to be wooers for Chriſt, and to beſeech you in the name of Chriſt, to be married to him; and I deſire in the name of God to make this propoſal, Will you hearken to it and accept of it? God in his Word doth offer to be married to your Souls, God doth call you, you have every one of you run away from God, and he calls you, as he did to Iſrael of old, *Return you back-ſliding Children, for I am* (I will be) *married unto you*, Jer. 3. 14. What do you ſay? Will you give Conſent or no? ſhall your Maker be your Husband or ſhall he not? ask your own hearts this queſtion, Art thou willing, Oh my Soul to be eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or art thou not? we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, and he hath ſent me to invite you to him. And if this day there might be but one Soul brought in to accept of Jeſus Chriſt, as it would be *the day of the gladneſs of his heart*, Song. 3. 11, ſo would it be the rejoicing of

mine. There is no such match as this, no such Husband as Jesus Christ; how near it espoused to God and Jesus Christ! none nearer than Husband and Wife, the Lord therefore prevail with you. You have in the foregoing papers, direction to and information of a Design of a worthy man, and Minister of God, proposing in several treatises, advice about particular transacting with God, between God and your own Souls apart, not in word only, but in writing; and you have also a few things added to shew the warrantableness, and advantage of so doing: and I could wish that every Christian in the World, might be prevailed with to do it effectually and speedily, Blessed be God for the comfort of it! never any one that hath tasted of the comfort of it would for any thing have it to do. Besides the instance of one person, I have given in the foregoing *Appendix*, that in sore troubles improved it, I shall here add one more of a person dying, whom when I came to visit, being near to death, after I asked concerning

ing the parties ſtate, I ſaid I hope you are able to reſign up your whole ſelf, Body and Soul, into the hands of God: Reply was made, this have I done between God and my own ſelf many a time in a Corner; and the draught between God and the Perſon, was found after amongſt other writings, when deceaſed. So that there is no greater preparative, that fits for, nor will there be a greater ſtay to comfort, and embolden, when at the point of death: What can be greater encouragement hereunto, than the experience of the Saints of God, both living and dead? Up therefore, and delay no longer, but do it, that ſo you may live, and die in full aſſurance, that you are, and ſhall be fully, and for ever, near to God.

2. Branch of Exhortation. Let me beſeech you in the name of God, that have made ſure that you are a people near to God, that you would walk as a people near unto him. Firſt, make the matter clear, and then be ſure to have ſuitable Converſation; and that will be ſo

if the former be done indeed, for the same Spirit of Grace that draws us to the one, will enable us to the other. Carry it towards God as becomes so great a Privileg.

Query, *But how shall we do that may some say?*

Answ. 1. Be sure to have a care of that that will cloud your evidences, and assurance of Nearness unto God, and put you in your apprehensions at a great distance again from him. You may get assurance, but then take heed, you do not meddle with that which will cloud it: time was you rejoiced in God as your God, and your Father, that your selves were his Children, taken into Covenant with him, and into his family, in the neerest relation to him. And when you are near to God, you will be ever near to God: but yet you may lose your assurance by your sin; for that will set you at a distance again, it being a forsaking God, and departure from him; and so cloud your apprehension of Gods affection, your adoption, and regenerati-

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on and acceptation, and thereby rob you of the Comfort of your condition and all your relation to God; therefore have a care of ſin, of all and every ſin whatſoever, and ſpecially your own iniquity. Some perſons are addicted to ſome ſins more than others, ſpecially therefore take care of them, theſe will crack your peace, and cloud your evidences: walk watchfully therefore, and labour to have an unſpotted Converſation; for the ſpots and ſins of a mans Converſation will be clouds upon his Soul, and will blur all his evidences, and ſo break his Peace.

2. Keep near to God as much as you can, and be as often with God as poſſibly you can. Do not carry it ſtrangely towards God: be often in Gods Company, and frequent in his preſence, often ſee his face, and draw nigh to him: my meaning is, be often in the uſe of Ordinances, and the Duties of Gods Worſhip; ſpecially in Prayer, which is a duty wherein God and the Soul draw as near one to another as in any duty what-

whatsoever. Nobles are still about the King, and if the King stir to any place without their privity, away they go, and post to follow after him; so should we, if God seems to withdraw himself: so the Church after her beloved, *Song.* 3. & 5. *Psal.* 63. 8. *My Soul followeth hard after thee*, saith *David*.

3. Bless God for his distinguishing Mercy, to you above many others, many thousands in the World: how many are kept off, and at a distance still, and what are you that you should be made nigh to God, when many thousands are yet so far off from him! I cannot tell you why it should be so, only it is Gods good-will towards you; because he will do it, therefore he doth it. There are thousands and ten thousands in the World, that have not this liberty to come near to God; they are in the same state that ever they were, and enjoy not such a Priviledg as this is; therefore should we seriously consider it. Mark what the Holy Ghost speaks, Deut. 6. 7, 8. *Thou art an holy people*

ple unto the Lord thy God, the Lord hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial people unto himſelf, above all people that are upon the Face of the earth. The Lord did not ſet his love upon you, or chuſe you, becauſe ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the feweſt of all people; but becauſe the Lord loved you, and becauſe he would keep the oath which he had ſworn unto our Forefathers, &c. and ſay within your hearts, why ſhould God deal ſo with me to bring me ſo near to him, and leave others in the ſame ſtate wherein they were born? let your hearts be mightily affected with this Love of God, and kindneſs of God. Methinks I could dwell on the perſwaſion of people to this duty, that they would be much more taken with the Conſideration of Gods ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing Kindneſs towards them.

4. Laſtly be ſure to be humble and keep low; and that upon a double reaſon. 1. Becauſe that though you are a people nigh to God, of his free Grace, yet there is a great diſtance and diſproportion between

God and you; for though you are brought ſo near God, yet you are but Creatures: whereas God is the great Creatour, you are *but duſt and aſhes*; God is the infinite, holy Majeſty of Heaven and Earth. Now the diſtance that is between God and you, ſhould dwell upon your hearts, and make you keep in a lowly frame ſtill, and ſhould Create ſelf-abaſing thoughts in you ſo much the more: The Conſideration of our Priviledges, & the Conſideration of God's great diſtance from us, ſhou'd increaſe our ſelf-abaſement. 2. And then upon the account of our own ſinfulneſs we ſhould be humble before God. Micah. 6. 8. *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee? but to do juſtly and love mercy and walk humbly with thy God.* See to it, that you do walk more lowly, and ſelf-abſingly, conſidering what you are, on both theſe accounts, although God hath ſo dignified you. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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